TOM STRONG LINCOLN'S SCOUT

ALFRED BISHOP MASON

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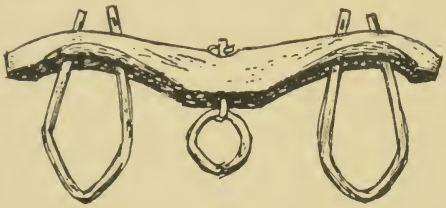

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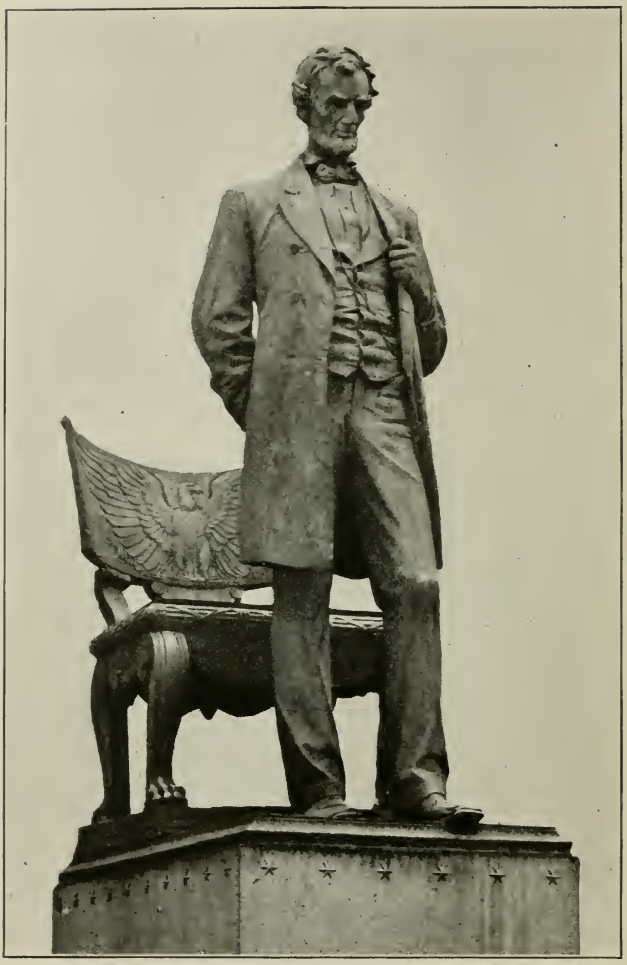

St. Gaudens' Statue of Lincoln

TOM STRONG, LINCOLN'S SCOUT

A STORY OF THE UNITED STATES IN THE TIMES THAT TRIED MEN'S SOULS

By

ALFRED BISHOP MASON

Author of "Tom Strong, Washington's Scout," "Tom Strong, Boy-Captain," "Tom Strong, Junior," and "Tom Strong, Third"

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TO

THEODORE ROOSEVELT

INSPIRER OF PATRIOTISM,
A GREAT AMERICAN

OYSTER BAY
LONG ISLAND, N.Y.

August 31st, 1917.

Dear Mr. Mason:

All right, I shall break my rule andhave you dedicate that book to me. Thank you!

Faithfully yours,

Theodore Roosevelt

Mr. Alfred B. Mason,
University Club,
New York City.

FOREWORD

MANY of the persons and personages who appear upon the pages of this book have already lived, some in history and some in the pages of "Tom Strong, Washington's Scout," "Tom Strong, Boy-Captain," "Tom Strong, Junior," or "Tom Strong, Third." Those who wish to know the full story of the four Tom Strongs, great-grandfather, grandfather, father and son, should read those books, too.

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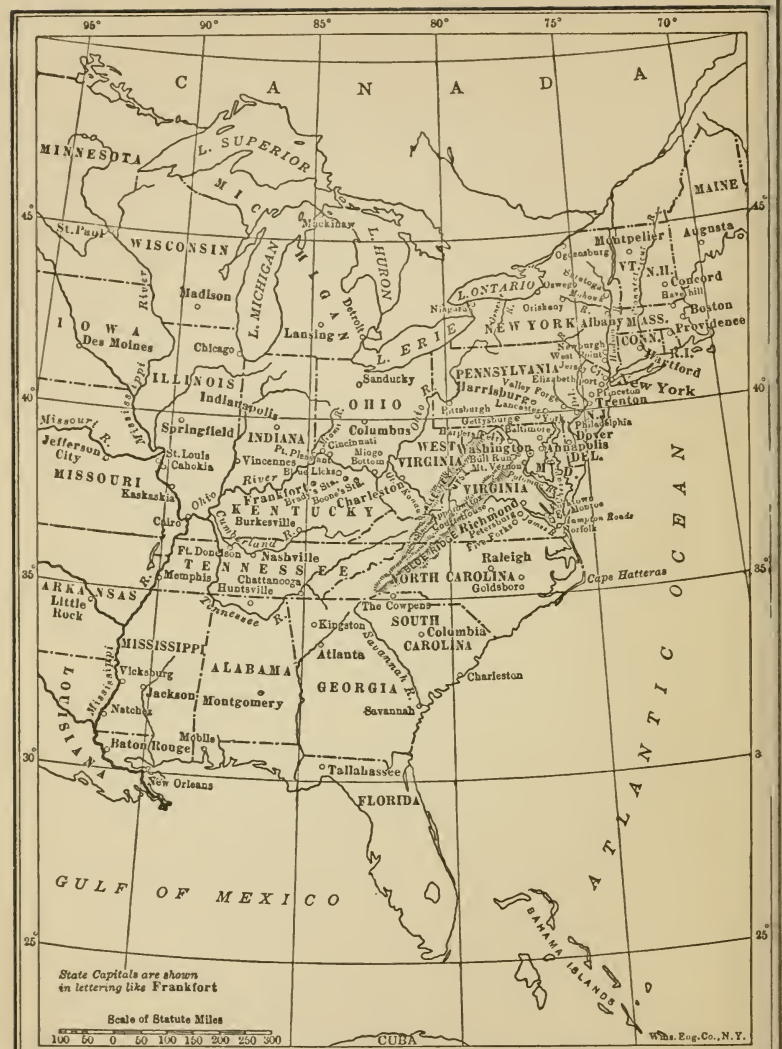
TOM STRONG, LINCOLN'S SCOUT



THE EASTERN UNITED STATES

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TOM STRONG, LINCOLN'S SCOUT

CHAPTER I

Tom Rides in Western Maryland—Halted by Armed Men—John Brown—The Attack upon Harper's Ferry—The Fight—John Brown's Soul Goes Marching On.

ON a beautiful October afternoon, a man and a boy were riding along a country road in Western Maryland. To their left lay the Potomac, its waters gleaming and sparkling beneath the rays of the setting sun. To their right, low hills, wooded to the top, bounded the view. They had left the little town of Harper's Ferry, Virginia, an hour before; had crossed to the Maryland shore of the Potomac; and now were looking for some country inn or friendly farmhouse where they and their horses could be cared for overnight.

The man was Mr. Thomas Strong, once Tom

Strong, third, and the boy was his son, another Tom Strong, the fourth to bear that name. Like the three before him he was brown and strong, resolute and eager, with a smile that told of a nature of sunshine and cheer. They were looking for land. Mr. Strong had inherited much land in New York City. The growth of that great town had given him a comfortable fortune. He had decided to buy a farm somewhere and a friend had told him that Western Maryland was almost a paradise. So it was, but this Eden had its serpent. Slavery was there. It was a mild and patriarchal kind of slavery, but it had left its black mark upon the countryside. Across the nearby Mason and Dixon's line, Pennsylvania was full of little farms, tilled by their owners, and of little towns, which reflected the wealth of the neighboring farmers. Western Maryland was largely owned by absentee landlords. Its towns were tiny villages. Its farms were few and far between. The free State was briskly alive; the slave State was sleepily dead.

The two riders were splendidly mounted, the father on a big bay stallion, Billy-boy, and the son on a black Morgan mare, Jennie. Billy-boy was a descendant of the Billy-boy General Washington had given to the first Tom Strong, many years before. Jennie was a descendant of the Jennie Tom Strong, third, had ridden across the plains of the great West with John C. Fremont, "the Pathfinder," first Republican candidate for President of the United States.

"We haven't seen a house for miles, Father," said the boy.

"And we were never out of sight of a house when we were riding through Pennsylvania. There's always a reason for such things. Do you know the reason?"

"No, sir. What is it?"

"The sin of slavery. I don't believe I shall buy land in Maryland. I thought I might plant a colony of happy people here and help to make Maryland free, in the course of years, but I'm beginning to think the right kind of white people won't come where the only work is done by

slaves. We must find soon a place to sleep. Perhaps there'll be a house around that next turn in the road. Billy-boy whinnies as though there were other horses near."

Billy-boy's sharp nose had not deceived him. There were other horses near. Just around the turn of the road there were three horses. Three armed men were upon them. Father and son at the same moment saw and heard them.

"You stop! Who be you?"

The sharp command was backed by uplifted pistols. The Strongs reined in their horses, with indignant surprise. Who were these three farmers who seemed to be playing bandits upon the peaceful highroad? The boy glanced at his father and tried to imitate his father's cool demeanor. He felt the shock of surprise, but his heart beat joyously with the thought: "This is an adventure!" All his young life he had longed for adventures. He had deeply enjoyed the novel experience of the week's ride with the father he loved, but he had not hoped for a thrill like this.

Mr. Strong eyed the three horsemen, who seemed both awkward and uneasy. "What does this mean?" he asked.

"Now, thar ain't goin' to be no harm done you nor done bub, thar, neither," the leader of the highwaymen answered, with a note almost of pleading in his voice. "Don't you be oneasy. But you'll have to come with us——"

"And spend Sunday with us——" broke in another man.

"Shet up, Bill. I'll do all the talkin' that's needed."

"That's what you do best," the other man grumbled.

"Well, Tom," said Mr. Strong, turning with a smile to his son, "we seem to have found that place to spend the night." He faced his captors. "This is a queer performance of yours. You don't look like highwaymen, though you act like them. Do you mean to steal our horses?" he added, sharply.

"We ain't no hoss thieves," replied the leader. "You've got to come with us, but you

needn't be no way oneasy. You, Bill, ride ahead!"

Bill turned his horse and rode ahead, Mr. Strong and Tom riding behind him, the other two men behind them. It was a silent ride, but not a long one. Within a mile, they reached a rude clearing that held a couple of log huts. The sun had set; the short twilight was over. Firelight gleamed in the larger of the huts. The prisoners were taken to it. A man who was lounging outside the door had a whispered talk with the three horsemen. Then he turned rather sheepishly; said: "Come in, mister; come in, bub;" opened the door, called within: "Prisoners, Captin' Smith," and stepped aside as father and son entered.

There were a dozen men in the big room, farmers all, apparently. They were all on their feet, eyeing keenly the unexpected prisoners. Their eyes turned to a tall man, who stepped forward and held out his hand, saying:

"Sorry the boys had to take you in, but you and your hosses are safe and we won't

keep you long. The day of the Lord is at hand."

There was a grim murmur of approval from the other men. The Lord's day, as Sunday is sometimes called, was at hand, for it was then the evening of Saturday, October 15, 1859. But that was not what the speaker meant. He was not what his followers called him, Captain Smith. He was John Brown, of North Elba, New York, of Kansas ("bleeding Kansas" it was called then, when slaveholders from Missouri and freedom-lovers under John Brown had turned it into a battlefield), and he was soon to be John Brown of Harper's Ferry, Virginia, first martyr in the cause of Freedom on Virginian soil. To him "the day of the Lord" was the day when he was to attack slavery in its birthplace, the Old Dominion, and that attack had been set by him for Sunday, October 16. His plan was to seize Harper's Ferry, where there was a United States arsenal, arm the slaves he thought would come to his standard from all Virginia, and so compass the fall of

the Slave Power. A wild plan, an impossible plan, the plan of an almost crazy fanatic, and a splendid dream, a dream for the sake of which he was glad to give his heroic life.

He had rented this Maryland farm in July, giving his name as Smith and saying he expected to breed horses. By twos and threes his followers had joined him in this solitary spot, until now there were twenty-one of them. The few folk scattered through the countryside had begun to be suspicious of this strange gathering of men. All sorts of wild stories circulated, though none was as wild as the truth. The men themselves were tense under the strain of the long wait. They feared discovery and attack. For the three days before "the day of the Lord" they had patrolled the one road, looking out for soldiers or for spies. Tom and his father had been their sole captives.

John Brown was one of Nature's noblemen and among his friends in Massachusetts and New York were some of the foremost men of their time, so he had learned to know a real man

JOHN BROWN

when he met one. He soon found out that Mr. Strong was a real man. He told him of his plans, and urged him to join in the projected foray on Harper's Ferry. But when Mr. Strong refused and tried to show him how mad his project was, the fires of the fanatic blazed within him.

"Did not Joshua bring down the walls of Jericho with a ram's horn?" he shouted. "And with twenty armed men cannot I pull down the walls of the citadel of Slavery? Are you a true man or not? Will you join me or not? Answer me yes or no."

"No," was the response, quiet but firm.

"You shall join me; you and your boy," thundered the crusader, hammering the table with his mighty fist. "Here, Jim, put these people under guard and keep them until we start."

Tom and his father were well-treated, but they were kept under guard until the next night and were then taken along by John Brown's

"army," which trudged off into the darkness afoot, while Billy-boy and Jennie and the other horses in the corral whinnied uneasily, sensing, as animals do, the stir of a departure which is to leave them behind. In the center of the little column the two captives marched the five miles to Harper's Ferry and started across the bridge that led to that tiny town.

A brave man, one Patrick Hoggins, was night-watchman of the bridge. He heard the trampling of many feet upon the plank-flooring. He hurried towards the strange sound.

"Halt!" shouted somebody in the column.

"Now I didn't know what 'halt' mint then," Patrick testified afterwards, "anny more than a hog knows about a holiday."

But he had seen armed men and he turned to run and give an alarm. A bullet was swifter than he, but not swifter than his voice. He fell, but his shouts had alarmed the town. There were two or three watchmen at the arsenal. They came forward, only to be made prisoners. The few citizens who had been

aroused could do nothing. The "army" seized the arsenal without difficulty.

Five miles from Harper's Ferry lived Col. Lewis W. Washington, gentleman-farmer and slave-owner, great-grand-nephew of another gentleman-farmer and slave-owner, George Washington. At midnight, Colonel Washington was awakened by a blow upon his bedroom door. It swung open and the light of a burning torch showed the astonished Southerner four armed men, one of them a negro, who bade him rise and dress. They were a patrol sent out by Brown. Their leader, Stevens, asked:

"Haven't you a pistol Lafayette gave George Washington and a sword Frederick the Great sent him?"

"Yes."

"Where are they?"

"Downstairs."

His four captors tramped downstairs with him. Pistol and sword were found.

"I'll take the pistol," said Stevens. "You hand the sword to this negro."

John Brown wore this sword during the fighting that followed. It is now in the possession of the State of New York. While its being sent George Washington by Frederick the Great is doubtful—the story runs that the Prussian king sent with it a message "From the oldest general to the best general"—its being surrendered by Lewis Washington to the negro is true.

Lewis was then on the staff of the Governor of Virginia, and had acquired in this way his title of Colonel. He was put into his own carriage. His slaves, few in number, were bundled into a four-horse farm-wagon. They were told to come and fight for their freedom. Too scared to resist, they came as they were bidden to do, but they did no fighting. At Harper's Ferry they and their fellow-slaves, seized at a neighboring plantation, escaped back to slavery at the first possible moment. Not a single negro voluntarily joined John Brown. He had expected a widespread slave insurrection. There was nothing of the sort. By Monday morning he knew he had failed, failed utterly.

Before Monday's sun set, Harper's Ferry was full of soldiers, United States regulars and State militia. Brown, his men and his white captives, eleven of the latter, were shut up in the fire-engine house of the armory. The militia refused to charge the engine-house, saying that this might cost the captives their lives. Many of them were drunk; all of them were undisciplined; their commander did not know how to command. The situation changed with the arrival of the United States Marines led by Lieut.-Col. Robert E. Lee, afterwards the famous chief of the army of the Confederate States.

By this time Tom was beginning to think he had had enough adventure. He had enjoyed that silent tramp through the darkness beside his father. He had enjoyed it the more because they were both prisoners-of-war. Being a prisoner was an amazingly thrilling thing. He was sorry when brave Patrick Hoggins was shot and glad to know the wound was slight, but sharing in the skirmish, even in the humble capacity of

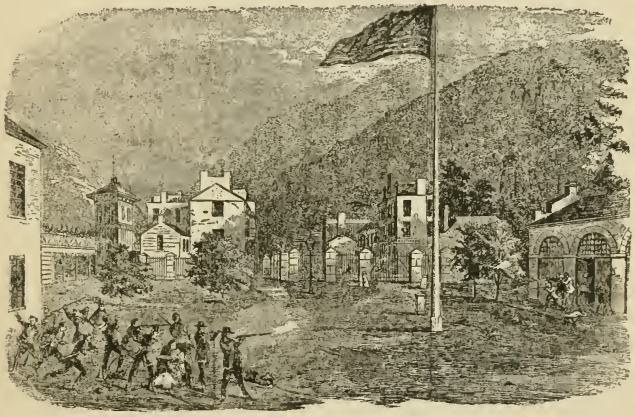
a captive, had excited the boy immensely. Now that there was almost constant firing back and forth, when two or three wounded men were lying on the floor, and when his father and he and Colonel Washington were perforce risking their lives in the engine-house, with nothing to gain and everything to lose, and when scanty sleep and little food had tired out even his stout little body, Tom felt quite ready to go home and have his adored mother "mother" him. His father saw the homesickness in his eyes.

"Steady, my son," said Mr. Strong. "This won't last long. No stray bullet is apt to reach this corner, where Captain Brown has put us. The only other danger is when the regulars rush in here, but unless they mistake us for the raiders, there'll be no harm done then. Steady." He looked through a bullet-hole in the boarded-up window and added: "Here comes a flag of truce. Listen."

The scattering fire died away. The hush was broken by a commanding voice, demanding surrender.

"There will be no surrender," quoth grim John Brown.

At dawn of Tuesday, two files of United States Marines, using a long ladder as a battering ram, attacked the door It broke at the



THE ATTACK ON THE ENGINE-HOUSE

second blow. The marines poured in, shooting and striking. The battle was over. John Brown, wounded and beaten to the floor, lay there among his men. The captives were free. Their captors had changed places with them.

Colonel Washington took Mr. Strong and Tom home with him, for a rest after the strain

of the captivity. He was much interested when he found out that Tom's great-grandfather had visited General Washington at Mount Vernon and Tom was intensely interested in seeing the home and home life of a rich Southern planter. The Colonel asked his guests to stay until after the trial of their recent jailer. They did so and Mr. Strong, after some hesitation, decided to take Tom to the trial and afterwards to the final scene of all. He wrote to his wife: "Life is rich, my dear, in proportion to the number of our experiences and their depth. Ordinarily, I would not dream of taking Tom to see a criminal hung. But John Brown is no ordinary criminal. He is wrong, but he is heroic. He faces his fate —for of course they will hang him—like a Roman. I think it will do Tom good to see a hero die."

Whether or no his father was right, Tom was given these experiences. He sat beside his father and Colonel Washington at the trial. He heard them testify. He noted the angry stir of the mob in the court-room when Mr. Strong

made no secret of his admiration for the great criminal.

Robert E. Lee, who captured Brown, said: "I am glad we did not have to kill him, for I believe he is an honest, conscientious old man." Virginia, Lee's State, thought she did have to kill this invader of her soil and disturber of her slaves.

November 2, John Brown was sentenced to be hung December 2. The next day he added this postscript to a letter he had already written to his wife and children:

"P.S. Yesterday Nov. 2d I was sentenced to be hanged on Decem 2d next. Do not grieve on my account. I am still quite cheerful. God bless you all."

Northern friends offered to try to help him to break jail. He put aside the offer with the calm statement: "I am fully persuaded that I am worth inconceivably more to hang than for any other purpose."

December 2, John Brown started on his last

journey. He sat upon his coffin in a wagon and as the two horses paced slowly from jail to gallows, he looked far afield, over river and valley and hill, and said: "This *is* a beautiful country." He was sure he was upon the threshold of a far more beautiful country. The gallows were guarded by a militia company from Richmond, Virginia. In its ranks, rifle on shoulder, stood Wilkes Booth, a dark and sinister figure, who was to win eternal infamy by assassinating Abraham Lincoln. Beside the militia was a trim lot of cadets, the fine boys of the Virginia Military Institute. With them was their professor, Thomas J. Jackson, "Stonewall" Jackson, one of the heroic figures upon the Southern side of our Civil War.

When the end came, Stonewall Jackson's lips moved with a prayer for John Brown's soul; Colonel Washington's and Mr. Strong's eyes were wet; and Tom Strong sobbed aloud. Albany fired a hundred guns in John Brown's honor as he hung from the gallows. In 1859 United States troops captured him that he

might die. In 1899 United States troops fired a volley of honor over his grave in North Elba that the memory of him might live. Victor Hugo called him "an apostle and a hero." Emerson dubbed him "saint." Oswald Garrison Villard closes his fine biography of John Brown with these words: "Wherever there is battling against injustice and oppression, the Charlestown gallows that became a cross will help men to live and die."

CHAPTER II

Our War with Mexico—Kit Carson and His Lawyer, Abe Lincoln—Tom Goes to Lincoln's Inauguration—S. F. B. Morse, Inventor of the Telegraph—Tom Back in Washington.

IN 1846, Mr. Strong, long enough out of Yale to have begun business and to have married, had heard his country's call and had helped her fight her unjust war with Mexico. General Grant, who saw his first fighting in this war and who fought well, says of it in his Memoirs that it was "one of the most unjust ever waged by a stronger against a weaker nation."

Much more important things were happening here then than the Mexican War. In 1846 Elias Howe invented the sewing-machine. In 1847 Robert Hoe invented the rotary printing press. Great inventions like these are the real milestones of the path of progress.

Mr. Strong served as a private in the ranks throughout the war. He refused a commission offered him for gallantry in action because he knew he did not know enough then to command men. It is a rare man who knows that he does not know. His regiment was mustered out of service at the end of the war in New Orleans. The young soldier decided to go home by way of St. Louis because of his memories of that old town in the days when he had followed Fremont. He went again to the Planters' Hotel and there by lucky accident he met again the famous frontiersman Kit Carson. Carson was away from the plains he loved because of a lawsuit. A sharp speculator was trying to take away from him some land he had bought years ago near the town, which the growth of the town had now made quite valuable. Carson was heartily glad to see his "Tom-boy" once more. He insisted upon his staying several days, took him to court to hear the trial, and introduced him to his lawyer, a tall, gaunt, slab-sided, slouching, plain person from the neighboring

State of Illinois. Everybody who knew him called him "Abe." His last name was Lincoln.

"I'd heard so much of Abe Lincoln," said Carson, "that when this speculator who's trying to do me hired all the big lawyers in St. Louis, I just went over to Springfield, Illinois, to get Abe. When I saw him I rather hesitated about hiring such a looking skeesicks, but when I came to talk with him, he did the hesitating. I asked him what he'd charge for defending a land-suit in St. Louis. He told me. I sez: 'All right. You're hired. You're my lawyer.'

"'Wait a bit,' sez he.

"'What for?' sez I. 'I'll pay what you said.'

"'That ain't all,' sez he. 'Before I take your money, Kit, I've got to know your side of the case is the right side.'

"'What difference does that make to a lawyer?' sez I.

"'It makes a heap o' difference to this lawyer,' sez he. 'You've got to prove your case to me before I'll try to prove it to the court. If

you ain't in the right, Abe Lincoln won't be your lawyer.'

"Darned if he didn't make me prove I was in the right, too, before he'd touch my money. No wonder they call him 'Honest Abe.'"

It took Lincoln a couple of days to win Kit Carson's suit. During those two days young Strong saw much of him and came to admire the sterling qualities of the man. Lincoln, too, liked this young college-bred fellow from the East, unaffected, well-mannered, friendly, and gay. There was the beginning of a friendship between the Westerner and the Easterner. Thereafter they wrote each other occasionally. When Lincoln served his one brief term in Congress, Mr. Strong spent a week with him in Washington and asked him (but in vain) to visit him in New York.

So, when this new giant came out of the West and Illinois gave her greatest son to the country, as its President, Mr. Strong went to Washington to see him inaugurated and took with him his boy Tom, as his father had taken

him in 1829 to Andrew Jackson's inauguration.

Washington was still a great shabby village, not much more attractive March 4, 1861, than it was March 4, 1829. The crowds at the two inaugurations were much alike. In both cases the favorite son of the West had won at the polls. In both cases the West swamped Washington. But in 1829 there was jubilant victory in the air. In 1861 there was somber anxiety. Seven Southern States had "seceded" and had formed another government. Other States were upon the brink of secession. Was the great democratic experiment of the world about to end in failure? Would there be civil war? What was this unknown man out of the West going to do? Could he do anything?

Mr. Strong and Tom, with a few thousand other people, went to the reception at the White House on the afternoon of March fourth. President Lincoln was laboriously shaking hands with everybody in the long line. Almost every one of them seemed to be asking him for

something. He was weary long before Tom and his father reached him, but his face brightened as he saw them. A boy always meant a great deal to Abraham Lincoln. "There *may* be so much in a boy," he used to say. He greeted the two warmly.

"Howdy, Strong? Glad to see you. This your boy? Howdy, sonny?"

Tom did not enjoy being called "sonny" much more than he had enjoyed being called "bub," but he was glad to have this big man with a woman's smile call him anything. He wrung the President's offered hand, stammered something shyly, and was passing on with his father, when Lincoln said:

"Hold on a minute, Strong. You haven't asked me for anything."

"I've nothing to ask for, Mr. President. I'm not here to beg for an office."

"Good gracious! You're the only man in Washington of that kind, I believe. Come to see me tomorrow morning, will you?"

"Most gladly, sir."

The impatient man behind them pushed them on. They heard him begin to plead: "Say, Abe, you know I carried Mattoon for you; I'd like to be Minister to England."

Boys and girls always appealed to the President's heart. When there were talks of vital import in his office, little Tad Lincoln often sat upon his father's knee. At a White House reception, Charles A. Dana once put his little girl in a corner, whence she saw the show. The father tells the story. When the reception was over, he said to Lincoln: "'I have a little girl here who wants to shake hands with you.' He went over to her and took her up and kissed her and talked to her. She will never forget it if she lives to be a thousand years old."

The next morning Tom followed his father into a room on the second floor of the White House. Lincoln sat at a flat-topped desk, piled high with papers. He was in his shirt-sleeves, with shabby black trousers, coarse stockings,

and worn slippers. He stretched out his long legs, swung his long arms behind his head, and came straight to the point.

"Strong, I'm going to need you. Your country is going to need you. I want you to go straight home and fix up your business affairs so you can come whenever I call you. Will you do it?"

"Yes, sir."

President and citizen rose and shook hands upon it. The citizen was about to go when Tom, with his heart in his mouth, but with a fine resolve in his heart, suddenly said:

"Oh, Father! Oh, Mr. President——"

Then he stopped short, too shy to speak, but Lincoln stooped down to him, patted his young head and said with infinite kindness in his tone:

"What is it, Tom? Tell me."

"Oh, Mr. President, I'm only a boy, but can't I do something for my country, right now? Can't I stay here? Father will let me, won't you, Father?"

Mr. Strong shook his head. The boy's face fell. It brightened again when Lincoln told him:

"When I send for your father, I'll send for you, Tom."

With that promise ringing in his ears, Tom went home to New York City. Home was a fine brick house at the northeast corner of Washington Place and Greene Street. The house was a twin brother of those that still stand on the north side of Washington Square. Tom had been born in it. Not long after his birth, his parents had given a notable dinner in it to a notable man. Tom had been present at the dinner, and he remembered nothing about it. As he was at the table but a few minutes, in the arms of his nurse, and less than a year old, it is not surprising that he did not remember it. His proud young mother had exhibited him to a group of money magnates, gathered at Mr. Strong's shining mahogany table for dinner, at the fashionable hour of three P.M., to see another young thing, almost as young as Tom.

This other young thing was the telegraph, just invented by Samuel F. B. Morse, at the University of the City of New York, which then filled half of the eastern boundary of Washington Square.

While Tom waited in the old brick house and played in Washington Square, history was making itself. Pope Walker, first Secretary of War of the Confederate States, sitting in his office at the Alabama Statehouse at Montgomery, the first Confederate capital, said: "It is time to sprinkle some blood in the face of the people." So he telegraphed the fateful order to fire on Fort Sumter, held by United States troops in Charleston harbor. Sumter fell. Lincoln called for 75,000 volunteers. Virginia, the famous Old Dominion, "the Mother of Presidents"—Washington, Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe were Virginians—seceded. The war between the States began.

Mr. Strong found in his mail one day this letter:

"The Executive Mansion,
Washington, April 17, 1861.

Sir:

The President bids me say that he would like to have you come to Washington at once and bring your son Tom with you.

Respectfully,

JOHN HAY,
Assistant Private Secretary."

Tom and his father started at once, as the President bade them. At Jersey City, they found the train they had expected to take had been pre-empted by the Sixth Massachusetts, a crack militia regiment of the Old Bay State, which was hurrying to Washington in the hope of getting there before the rebels did. The cars were crammed with soldiers. A sentry stood at every door. No civilian need apply for passage. However, a civilian with a letter from Lincoln's secretary bidding him also hurry to Washington was in a class by himself. With the help of an officer, the father and son ran the

blockade of bayonets and started southward, the only civilians upon the train. It was packed to suffocation with soldiers. Mr. Strong sat with the regimental officers, but he let Tom roam at will from car to car. How the boy enjoyed it. The shining gun-barrels fascinated him. He joined a group of merry men, who hailed him with a shout:

"Here's the youngest recruit of all."

"Are you really going to shoot rebels?" asked Tom.

"If we must," said Jack Saltonstall, breaking the silence the question brought, "but I hope it won't come to that."

"The war will be over in three months," Gordon Abbott prophesied.

"Pooh, it will never begin,—and I'm sorry for that," said Jim Casey, "I'd like to have some real fighting."

Within about three hours, Jim Casey was to see fighting and was to die for his country. The beginning of bloodshed in our Civil War was in the streets of Baltimore on April 19, 1861, just

eighty-six years to a day from the beginning of bloodshed in our Revolution on Lexington Common. Massachusetts and British blood in 1775; Massachusetts and Maryland blood in 1861.

When the long train stopped at the wooden car-shed which was then the Baltimore station, the regiment left the cars, fell into line and started to march the mile or so of cobblestone streets to the other station where the train for Washington awaited it. The line of march was through as bad a slum as an American city could then show. Grog-shops swarmed in it and about every grog-shop swarmed the toughs of Baltimore. They were known locally as "plug-uglies." Like the New York "Bowery boys" of that time, they affected a sort of uniform, black dress trousers thrust into boot-tops and red flannel shirts. Far too poor to own slaves themselves, they had gathered here to fight the slave-owners' battles, to keep the Massachusetts troops from "polluting the soil of Maryland," as their leaders put it, really to keep them from saving Washington.

A roar of jeers and taunts and insults hailed the head of the marching column. Tom was startled by it. He turned to his father. The two were walking side by side, in the center of the column, between two companies of the militia. He found his father had already turned to him.

"Keep close to me, Tom," said Mr. Strong.

The storm of words that beat upon them increased. At the next corner, stones took the place of words. The mob surged alongside the soldiers, swearing, stoning, striking, finally stabbing and shooting. The Sixth Massachusetts showed admirable self-restraint, which the "plug-uglies" thought was cowardice. They pressed closer. With a mighty rush, five thousand rioters broke the line of the thousand troops. The latter were forced into small groups, many of them without an officer. Each group had to act for itself. Tom and his father found themselves part of a tiny force of about twenty men, beset upon every side by desperadoes now mad with liquor and with the lust

of killing. Jack Saltonstall took command by common consent. Calmly he faced hundreds of rioters.

"Forward, march!"

As he uttered the words, he pitched forward, shot through the chest. A giant "plug-ugly" bellowed with triumph over his successful shot, yelled "kill 'em all!" and led the mob upon them. But Mr. Strong had snatched Saltonstall's gun as it fell from his nerveless hands, had leveled and aimed it, and had shouted "fire!" to willing ears. A score of guns rang out. The mob-leader whirled about and dropped. Half-a-dozen other "plug-uglies" lay about him. This section of the mob broke and ran. Some of them fired as they ran, and Jim Casey's life went out of him.

"Take this gun, Tom," said Mr. Strong.

The boy took it, reloading it as he marched, while his sturdy father lifted the wounded Saltonstall from the stony street and staggered forward with the body in his arms. Casey and two other men were dead. Their bodies had to

be left to the fury of the mob. Saltonstall lived to fight to the end. As the survivors of the twenty pressed forward, the mob behind followed them up. Bullets whizzed unpleasantly near. Twice, at Mr. Strong's command, the men faced about and fired a volley. In both these volleys, Tom's gun played its part. He had hunted before, but never such big game as men. The joy of battle possessed him. Since it was apparently a case of "kill or be killed," he shot to kill. Whether he did kill, he never knew. The two volleys checked two threatening rushes of the rioters and enabled Mr. Strong to bring what was left of the gallant little band safely to the railroad station. An hour later the Sixth Massachusetts was in Washington. During that hour Tom had been violently sick upon the train. He was new to this trade of man-killing.

At Washington, once vacant spaces were soon filled with camps. Soldiers poured in on every train. Orderlies were galloping about. Artillery surrounded the Capitol. And from its

dome Tom saw a Confederate flag, the Stars-and-Bars, flying defiantly in nearby Alexandria.

Those were dark days. There were Confederate forces within a few miles of the White House. Sumter surrendered April 15th. Virginia seceded on the 17th. Harper's Ferry fell into Southern hands on the 18th. The Sixth Massachusetts had fought its way through Baltimore on the 19th. Robert E. Lee resigned his commission in our army on the 20th and left Arlington for Richmond, taking with him a long train of army and navy officers whose loyal support, now lost forever, had seemed a national necessity. Lincoln spent many an hour in his private office, searching with a telescope the reaches of the Potomac, over which the troop-laden transports were expected. Once, when he thought he was alone, John Hay heard him call out "with irrepressible anguish": "Why don't they come? Why don't they come?" In public he gave no sign of the anxiety that was eating up his heart. He had the nerve to jest about it. The Sixth Massachusetts, the Seventh

New York, and a Rhode Island detachment had all hurried to save Washington from the capture that threatened. When the Massachusetts men won the race and marched proudly by the White House, Lincoln said to some of their officers: "I begin to believe there is no North. The Seventh Regiment is a myth. Rhode Island is another. You are the only real thing." They were very real, those men of Massachusetts, and they were the vanguard of the real army that was to be.

CHAPTER III

CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS—MR. STRONG GOES TO RUSSIA—TOM GOES TO LIVE IN THE WHITE HOUSE—BULL RUN—"STONEWALL" JACKSON—GEO. B. MCCLELLAN—TOM STRONG, SECOND LIEUTENANT, U. S. A.—THE BATTLE OF THE "MERRIMAC" AND THE "MONITOR."

A FEW days passed before the President had time to see Mr. Strong and Tom. When they were finally ushered into his working-room, they found there, already interviewing Lincoln, the hawk-nosed and hawk-eyed Secretary of State, William H. Seward of New York, scholar, statesman, and gentleman, and a short, grizzled man, the worthy inheritor of a great tradition. He was Charles Francis Adams of Boston, son and grandson of two Presidents of the United States. He had been appointed Minister to England, just then the most important foreign

appointment in the world. What England was to do or not do might spell victory or defeat for the Union. Mr. Adams had come to receive his final instructions for his all-important work. And this is what happened.

Shabby and uncouth, Lincoln faced his two well-dressed visitors, nodding casually to the two New Yorkers as they entered at what should have been a great moment.

"I came to thank you for my appointment," said Adams, "and to ask you——"

"Oh, that's all right," replied Lincoln, "thank Seward. He's the man that put you in." He stretched out his legs and arms, and sighed a deep sigh of relief. "By the way, Governor," he added, turning to Seward, "I've this morning decided that Chicago post-office appointment. Well, good-by."

And that was all the instruction the Minister to Great Britain had from the President of the United States. Even in those supreme days, the rush of office-seekers, the struggle for the spoils, the mad looting of the public offices for partisan

purposes, was monopolizing the time and absorbing the mind of our greatest President. There is a story that one man who asked him to appoint him Minister to England, after taking an hour of his time, ended the interview by asking him for a pair of old boots. Civil Service Reform has since gone far to stop this scandal and sin, but much of it still remains. Today you can fight for the best interests of our beloved country by fighting the spoils system in city, state, and nation.

Adams, amazed, followed Secretary Seward out of the little room. Then Lincoln turned to the father and son.

Tom had more time to look at him now. He saw a tall man with a thin, muscular, big nose, with heavy eyebrows above deep-set eyes and below a square, bulging forehead, and with a mass of black hair. The face was dark and sallow. The firm lips relaxed as he looked down upon the boy. A beautiful smile overflowed them. A beautiful friendliness shone from the deep-set eyes.

"So this is another Tom Strong," he said. "Howdy, Tommy?"

The boy smiled back, for the welcoming smile was irresistible. He put his little hand into Lincoln's great paw, hardened and roughened by a youth of strenuous toil. The President squeezed his hand. Tom was happy.

"You're to go to Russia, Strong," Mr. Lincoln said to the father. "England and France threaten to combine against us. You must get Russia to hold them back. We'll have a regular Minister there, but I'm going to depend upon you. See Governor Seward. He'll tell you all about it. Will you take Mrs. Strong with you?"

"Most certainly."

"Well, I s'posed you would. And how about Tom here?"

Tom's heart beat quick. What was coming now?

"Mrs. Strong must decide that. I suppose he had better keep on with his school in New York."

"Why not let him come to school in Washington?" asked Lincoln. "In the school of the world? You see," he added, while that irresistible smile again softened the firm outlines of his big man's mouth, "you see I've taken a sort of fancy to your boy Tom. S'pose you give him to me while you're away. There are things he can do for his country."

It was perhaps only a whim, but the whims of a President count. A month later, Mr. and Mrs. Strong started for St. Petersburg and Tom reported at the White House. He was welcomed by John Hay, a delightful young man of twenty-three, one of the President's two private secretaries. The welcome lacked warmth.

"You're to sleep in a room in the attic," said Hay, "and I believe you're to eat with Mr. Nicolay and me. I haven't an idea what you're to do and between you and me and the bedpost I don't believe the Ancient has an idea either. Perhaps there won't be anything. Wait a while and see."

The Ancient—this was a nickname his secre-

taries had given him—had a very distinct idea, which he had not seen fit to tell his zealous young secretary. Tom found the waiting not unpleasant. He had a good many unimportant things to do. "Tad" Lincoln, though younger, was a good playmate. The White House staff was kind to him. Even Hay found it difficult not to like him. Then there was the sensation of being at the center of things, big things. He saw men whose names were household words. Half a dozen times he lunched with the President's family, a plain meal with plain folks. Even the dinners at the White House, except the state dinners, were frugal and plain. Lincoln drank little or no wine. He never used tobacco. This was something of a miracle in the case of a man from the West, for in those days, particularly in the unconventional West, practically every man both smoked and chewed tobacco. The filthy spittoon was everywhere conspicuous. We fiercely resented the tales told our English cousins, first by Mrs. Trollope and then by Charles Dickens, about our tobacco-

chewing, but the resentment was so fierce because the tales were so true. Those were dirty days. In 1860 there were few bathrooms except in our largest cities. Those that existed were mostly new. In 1789, when the present Government of the United States came into being, in New York City, there was not one bathroom in the whole town.

At these family luncheons, Tom was apt to become conscious that Lincoln's eyes were bent beneath their shaggy eyebrows full upon him. There was nothing unkind in the glance, but the boy felt it go straight through him. He wondered what it all meant. Why was he not given more work to do? Had he been weighed and found wanting? He waited in suspense a good many months.

The early months of waiting were not merry months. In July, 1861, the first battle of Bull Run had been fought and had been lost. Our troops ran nearly thirty miles. Telegram after telegram brought news of disgrace and defeat to the White House. In the afternoon Lincoln

went to see Gen. Winfield S. Scott, then commander-in-chief of our armies. The fat old general was taking his afternoon nap. Awakened with difficulty, he gurgled that everything would come out well. Then he fell asleep again. Before six o'clock it was known that everything had turned out most badly. Washington itself was threatened by the Confederate pursuit. Lincoln had no sleep that night. The gray dawn found him at his desk, still receiving dispatches, still giving orders. When he left the desk, Washington was safe.

It was at the beginning of the battle of Bull Run, when the Confederates came near running away but did not do so because the Union troops ran first, that "Stonewall" Jackson got his famous nickname. The brigade of another Southern soldier, Gen. Bernard Bee, was wavering and falling back. Its commander, trying to hearten his men, called out to them: "Look! there's Jackson standing like a stone wall!" The men looked, rallied, and went on fighting. It may have been that one thing of Jackson's example

that turned the tide at Bull Run, gave the battle to the South, and prolonged the war by at least two years. Stonewall Jackson's soldiers were called foot-cavalry, because under his inspiring leadership they made marches which would have been a credit to mounted men. It was his specialty to be where it was impossible for him to be, by all the ordinary rules of war. He was a thunderbolt in attack, a stone wall in defense.

In November of that sad year of 1861, the President made another noteworthy call upon the then commander-in-chief, Gen. George B. McClellan. President and Secretary of State, escorted by young Hay and younger Tom, called upon the General at the latter's house, in the evening. They were told he was out, but would return soon, so they waited. McClellan did return and was told of his patient visitors. He walked by the open door of the room where they were seated and went upstairs. Half an hour later Lincoln sent a servant to tell him again

that they were there. Word came back that General McClellan had gone to bed. John Hay's diary justly speaks of "this unparalleled insolence of epaulettes." As the three men and the boy walked back to the White House, Hay said:

"It was an insolent rebuff. Something should be done about it."

Lincoln's almost godlike patience, however, had not been worn out.

"It is better," the great man answered, "at this time not to be making a point of etiquette and personal dignity."

The President, however, stopped calling upon the pompous General. After that experience, he always sent word to McClellan to call upon him.

One day, at the close of a family luncheon, the President said to Tom: "Come upstairs with me."

In the little private office, Lincoln took off his coat and waistcoat with a sigh of relief and

lounged into his chair. He bade Tom take a chair nearby. Then he looked at the boy for a moment, while his wonderful smile overflowed his strong lips.

"I've been studying you a bit, Tom. I think you'll do. Now I'll tell you what I want you to do."

The smile died quite away.

"Are you sure you can keep still when you ought to keep still? Balaam's ass isn't the only ass that ever talked. Most asses talk—and always at the wrong time."

"The last thing Father told me," Tom answered, "was never to say anything to anybody 'less I was sure you'd want me to say it."

"Your father is a wise man, my boy. Pray God he does what I hope he will in Russia."

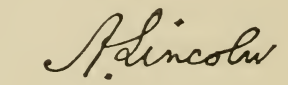
The serious face grew still more serious. The long figure slouching in the chair straightened and stiffened. The sloping shoulders seemed to broaden, as if to bear steadfastly a weight that

would have crushed most men. The dark eyes gleamed with a solemn hope. Tom longed to ask what his father was to try to do, but he was not silly enough to put his thought into words. Another good-by counsel his father had given him was never to ask the President a question, unless he had to do so. There was silence for a moment. Then Lincoln spoke again:

"You're to carry dispatches for me, Tom. This may take you into the enemy's country sometimes. If you were captured and were a civilian, it might go hard with you. So I've had you commissioned as a second lieutenant. If you should slip into a fight occasionally I wouldn't blame you much. Mr. Stanton, the Secretary of War, kicked about it. He said he didn't believe in giving commissions to babies. I told him you could almost speak plain and could go 'round without a nurse. Finally he gave in. I haven't much influence with this Administration"—here Tom looked puzzled until the President smiled over his own jest—

"but I did get you the commission. Here it is."

He laid the precious parchment on the desk, put on his spectacles, took up his quill pen, and wrote at the foot of it



The boy's heart thrilled and throbbed. He had never dreamed of such an opportunity and such an honor. He was an officer of the Union. He was to carry dispatches for the President of the United States. His hand shook a little as he took the commission, reverently.

"You've been detailed for special service, Tom. Stanton wanted to know whether your special service was to be to play with my boy, Tad. Stanton was pretty mad; that's a fact. Well, well, you must do your work so well that he'll get over the blow. You would have thought I was asking him for a brigadier's commission for a girl. Well, well. Being a war messenger is only one of your duties, son. You're to be my

scout. Keep your ears and eyes both open, Tom, and your mouth shut. Ever hear the story of what Jonah said to the whale when he got out of him? The whale said to Jonah: 'You've given me a terrible stomach-ache.' And Jonah said: 'That's what you got because you didn't have sense enough to keep your mouth shut.' But remember, Tom, to go scouting in the right way. What I want is the truth. It's a hard thing for a President to get. I don't want tittle-tattle, evil gossip, idle talk. When I was in Congress, there was a fine old fellow in the House from Florida. I remember he said once that the Florida wolf was 'a mean critter that'd go snoopin' 'round twenty miles a night ruther than not do a mischief.' Don't be a wolf, Tom,—but don't be a lamb either, with the wool pulled over your eyes and ears. Here's your first job. This envelope"—Lincoln took from the desk a sealed envelope, not addressed, and handed it to the boy—"this envelope is for the commander of the 'Cumberland,' in Hampton Roads. This War Department pass will

carry you anywhere. When Stanton signed it, he asked me whether he was to spend a whole day signing things for you to play with. Mrs. Lincoln has had a uniform made for you, on the sly. I rather think you'll find it in your room, Tom. You'd better start tomorrow."

"Mayn't I start this afternoon, Mr. President?"

"Good for you. Of course you may. I'll say good-by to the folks for you. God bless you, son."

Lincoln waved a kindly farewell as Tom, with drumbeats in his young heart, gave a fair imitation of an officer's salute—and strode out of the room with what he meant to be a manly step. Once outside, the step changed to a run. He flew along the halls and up the stairs to the attic. He burst into his room. On his narrow bed lay his new uniform. Mrs. Lincoln, kindly housewife that she was, had done her part in the little conspiracy for the benefit of the boy who was Tad Lincoln's beloved playmate. She had herself smuggled an old suit of Tom's to a

tailor, who had made from its measure the resplendent new blue uniform that now greeted Tom's enraptured eyes.

That afternoon, Lieutenant Tom Strong left the White House for Hampton Roads. A swift dispatch boat carried him there. He reached the flagship on a lovely, peaceful, spring day, and delivered his dispatches. The boat that had taken him there was to take him back the next morning. He was glad to have a night on a warship. It was a new experience. And his father had told him that experience was the best teacher in the world. The beautiful lines of the frigate were a joy to see. Her spick and span cleanliness, the trim and trig sailors and marines, the rows of polished cannon that thrust their grim mouths out of the portholes, these things delighted him. He was standing on the quarter-deck with Lieutenant Morris, almost wishing he could exchange his brand-new lieutenancy in the army for one in the navy, when from the Norfolk navy yard a rocket flared up into the air.

"What is that, sir?" asked Tom. "Is it a signal to you?"

"I fancy it is," Morris answered, "but it isn't meant to be. That's a rebel rocket. You know we lost the navy-yard early in the war and we haven't got it back—yet. That rocket went up from there. The Secesh are up to some deviltry. They've been signaling a good bit of late. I wish they'd come out and give us a chance at them. Hampton Roads is dull as ditchwater, with not a thing happening."

The gallant lieutenant yawned prodigiously. He little knew what terrible things were to happen on the morrow. That rocket meant that the rebel ram, the "Merrimac," the first iron-clad vessel that ever went into action, was to sail down Hampton Roads, where nothing ever happened, the next morning and was to make many things happen. The Confederates had converted the old Union frigate, the "Merrimac," into a new, strange, and monstrous thing. They had placed a battery of cannon of a size never before mounted on shipboard upon

her deck, close to the water-line; they had built over the battery a framework of stout timbers, covered with armor rolled from rails, and they had put a cast-iron bow upon this marine marvel. A wooden ship was a mere toy to her.

The next morning came—it was March 8, 1862—and the "Merrimac" came. As she emerged from distance and mist, our scout-boats came racing to the "Cumberland" with news of the danger that was fast nearing her. The news was a tonic to officers and to men. Here at last was something to fight. Here at last was something to do. They were all weary of having the flagship lie, week after week,

> "As idle as a painted ship
> Upon a painted ocean."

The men sprang to quarters with a joyful cheer. The officers were at their posts. The gun-crews waited impatiently for the order to fire. And Tom, again upon the quarter-deck, thrilled with the thrill of all about him, was glad to know that the dispatch boat would not sail until that after-

noon and that he could see the fight. Everyone around him was sure of victory. The foe was soon to be sunk. The Stars-and-Bars, now flying so impudently at her stern, was to be hung up as a trophy in the ward-room of the "Cumberland." It never was.

The ram steered straight for the flagship. She did not fire a shot, though the flagship's cannon roared. A tongue of fire blazed from every porthole of the starboard side, towards which she came, silently and swiftly. Behind every tongue of fire there rushed a cannon-ball. Many a ball hit the "Merrimac." A wooden ship would have been blown to bits by the concentrated fury of the cannonade. Alas! the cannon-balls glanced from her armored sides "like peas from a pop-gun." They rattled like hail upon her and did her no more hurt than hail-stones would have done. She came on like an irresistible Fate. There had been shouts of savage joy below decks when the first order to fire had echoed through them. A burst of wild cheering from the gun-crews had almost

drowned the first thunder of the guns. There were no shouts or cheers now. Sharp orders pierced the clangor of artillery.

"Stand by to board!"

The marines formed quickly at the starboard bow of the "Cumberland." Then at last the guns of the "Merrimac" spoke. She was close upon her prey now. The sound of her first volley was the voice of doom. Her great cannon sent masses of iron through and through the pitiful wooden walls that had dared to stand up against walls of iron. The shrieks of wounded men, of men screaming their mangled lives away, rolled up to the quarter-deck. A messenger dashed up there.

"Half the gun-crew officers are dead. Send us others!"

"Go below," said Lieutenant Morris, turning to two young midshipmen who stood near Tom, "keep the guns manned."

The two middies bounded below and Tom bounded down with them. There was no hope of victory now, but the fight must be fought to

a finish. If the cannon could still be served, a lucky shot might strike the foe in a vital part, might disable her engines, might carry away her steering-gear, might—there was a long chapter of possible accidents to the "Merrimac" that might still save the "Cumberland" from what seemed to be her sure destruction. As the three boys raced down to the gun-deck, they saw a fearful scene. Dead and wounded men lay everywhere. The sawdust that in those days used to be strewn about, before entering action, in order to soak up the blood of the men who fell and keep the decks from growing slippery with it, had soaked up all it could, but there were thin red trickles flowing along the deck. Two or three of the cannon had been dismounted. Crushed masses that had been human flesh lay beneath them. A dying officer half raised himself to give one last command and fell back dead before he could speak. The men were standing to their task as American sailors are wont to do, but like all men they needed leaders. Three leaders came. The two middies and Tom

took command of these officerless cannon. The other two boys knew their work and did it. Tom knew that it was his business to keep his cannon at work and he did it. He repeated, mechanically:

"Load! Fire! Load! Fire!"

His men responded to the command. The cannon roared once, twice. Then there came a sickening shock. The rebel ram drove its iron prow home through the side of the "Cumberland." The good ship reeled far over under the deadly blow, righted herself, but began to sink. Her race was run. The black bulk of the "Merrimac" was just opposite the porthole of the gun Tom was handling. There was a last order. With the lips of their muzzles wet with the engulfing sea, the cannon of the "Cumberland" roared their last defiance of death. Down went the ship. The sea about her was black with wreckage and with struggling men. Boats from other ships and from the shore darted among them, picking them up. The dispatch boat that had brought Tom down was busy with

that good work. The "Merrimac" could have sunk her without effort, but of course the Confederates never dreamed of making the effort. Americans do not fire at drowning men. When Tom jumped into the water, as the ship sank beneath him, he swam to a shattered spar and clutched it. But other men who could not swim clutched at it too. It threatened to sink with their added weight and carry them down with it. So the boy, thoroughly at home in the water, let go, turned upon his back, floated with his nose just above the surface, and waited for the help that was at hand. A boat-hook caught his trousers at the waist-band. He was pulled up to the deck of the dispatch boat. It was not quite the way in which he had expected to board her. From her bridge, with the deck below him crowded with the rescued sailors of the "Cumberland," he saw the second sad act of that day's tragedy.

The "Merrimac" had backed away, after that terrible thrust of her iron ram, until she was free from the ship she had destroyed. Then she

laid her course for the "Congress," invincible yesterday, today helplessly weak in the face of this new terror of the seas. The "Congress" fought to the last gasp, but that last gasp came all too soon. Raked fore and aft by her adversary's guns, unable to fire a single effective shot in reply, she ran upon a shoal while trying to escape from being rammed and lay there, no longer a fighting machine, but a mere target for her foe. Her captain could not hope to save his ship. The only thing he could do was to save the lives of such of his crew as were still alive. And there was but one way to do that. The "Congress" surrendered. The Stars-and-Stripes fluttered down from her masthead. In place of the flag of the free, the Stars-and-Bars, symbol of slavery, flew above the surrendered ship. The "Cumberland," going down with her flag, had had the better fate of the two.

The "Merrimac," justly satisfied with her day's work and with the toll she had taken of the Union squadron, steamed proudly back to Norfolk, to repair the slight damages she had

suffered and to make ready to complete her conquest on the morrow. Three Union ships still lay in Hampton Roads, great frigates, the finest of their kind then afloat, perfectly appointed, fully manned,—and as useless as though they had been the toy-boats of a child. The "Minnesota," now the flagship, signaled Captain Lawrence's stirring slogan: "Don't give up the ship!" It might have been called a bit of useless bravery, but no bravery is useless. At least the officers and men of the three doomed ships would fight for the flag until they died. It was just possible that one of the three might so maneuver that she would strike the foe amidships and sink with her to a glorious death.

That night the wild anxiety at Hampton Roads was more than echoed at New York and Washington. The wires had told the terrible tale of the "Merrimac." It was thought she could go straight to New York, sink all the shipping there, command the city and levy tribute upon it. Lincoln's Secretary of the

Navy, Gideon Welles of Connecticut, wrote in his diary that night: "The most frightened man on that gloomy day was the Secretary of War. He was at times almost frantic. . . . He ran from room to room, sat down and jumped up after writing a few words, swung his arms, and scolded and raved." Hay records that "Stanton was fearfully stampeded. He said they would capture our fleet, take Fort Monroe, be in Washington before night."

Without consulting the Secretary of the Navy, Stanton had some fifty canal-boats loaded with stone and sent them to be sunk on Kettle Bottom Shoals, in the Potomac, to keep the "Merrimac" from reaching Washington. The canal-boats reached the Shoals, but the order to sink them was countermanded by cooler heads. They were left in a long row, tied up to the river bank.

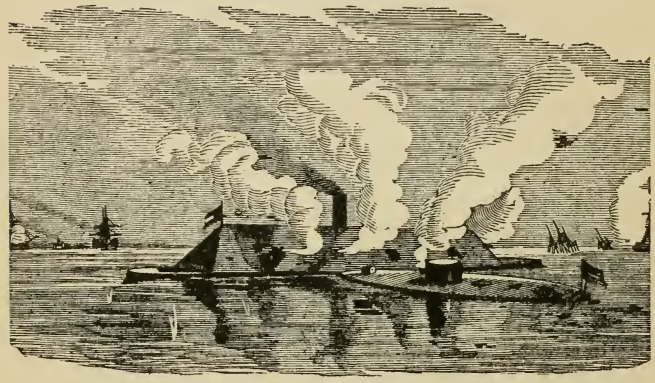
The three doomed ships at Hampton Roads soon knew that at nine o'clock of that fateful night there had steamed in from the ocean a

Union iron-clad. Her coming, however, brought scant comfort.

"What is she like?" asked the first captain to hear the news.

"Like? She's like a cheese-box on a raft."

It was not a bad description. She was the



THE BATTLE OF THE "MONITOR" AND THE "MERRIMAC"

"Monitor," an unknown boat of an unknown type that day, and on the morrow the most famous fighting craft that ever sailed the seas. She was born of the brain of a Swedish-American, Capt. John Ericsson, whose statue stands in Battery Park, the southern tip of the

metropolis, looking down to the ocean he saved for freedom's cause.

Lieut. A. L. Worden, commanding the "Monitor," was soon in consultation with the other commanders. They scarcely tried to disguise their belief that he had merely brought another predestined victim. His ship was tiny, compared with the "Merrimac." She was not built to ram, as was her terrible antagonist. Her guns were of a greater caliber, to be sure, than any wooden ship mounted, but there were but two of them and they could be brought to bear only by revolving the "Monitor's" turret, —a newfangled device in everyday use now, but then unknown and consequently despised. Men either fear or despise the unknown. They are usually wrong in doing either. The council of captains agreed upon a plan for the next day's fight. The plan was based upon the theory that the "Monitor" would be speedily sunk. Nevertheless, she was to face the foe first of all.

Again the next morning came and again there came the rebel ram. Decked out in flags as if

for a festival, proudly certain of victory, the "Merrimac" steamed down Hampton Roads. The cheese-box on a raft steamed out to meet her. It was David confronting Goliath. Goliath had fourteen guns and David had two. The iron-clads came nearer and the most famous sea-duel ever fought began. Tom saw it all from the bridge of the "Minnesota." Both vessels fired and fired again, without result. Their armor defied even the big guns they carried. Then the "Merrimac" tried to bring her deadly ram into play. The "Monitor" dodged into shoal water, hoping her foe would follow her and run aground. The "Merrimac" did not fall into the trap. On the contrary, she left her adversary and made a headlong course for the helpless "Minnesota." On board the latter, drums beat to quarters, shrill whistles gave orders, and the great ship moved forward to what seemed certain destruction. But the "Monitor" slipped away from the shoals and made after the "Merrimac," firing her guns as rapidly as her creaking turret could turn. The

"Merrimac" faced about, bound this time to make short work of this wretched little gnat that was seeking to sting her. This time the two came to close grips. Each tried to ram the other down. Each struck the other, but struck a glancing blow. They lay almost alongside and pounded each other with their giant guns. A missile from the "Monitor" came through a porthole of the "Merrimac," breaking a cannon and dealing death and destruction within her iron sides. She turned and ran for safety to the shelter of the Confederate batteries at Norfolk. The "Monitor" lay almost unharmed upon the gentle waves of Hampton Roads, the ungainly master of the seas. The "Merrimac" never dared again to try conclusions with her stout little rival. She stayed at her moorings until she was blown up there just before the Union forces captured Norfolk. The Union blockade was never broken. The "Monitor" survived the fight only to founder later in "the graveyard of ships," off Cape Hatteras.

The wires had told the story of the famous

fight before Tom reached Washington, but he was the first eye-witness of it to reach there and he had to tell the tale many and many a time. His first auditors were Lincoln and Secretary Welles. The dispatch boat that carried him back put him on board the President's boat, south of Kettle Bottom Shoals, on the Potomac, in obedience to orders signaled to it. When he had finished his story, there was silence for a moment. The boy saw Lincoln's lips move, perhaps in prayer, perhaps in thanksgiving. Then the grave face relaxed and the pathetic eyes twinkled with humor. The President laid his hand upon the Secretary's arm and pointed to a long line of stone-laden canal-boats that bordered the bank.

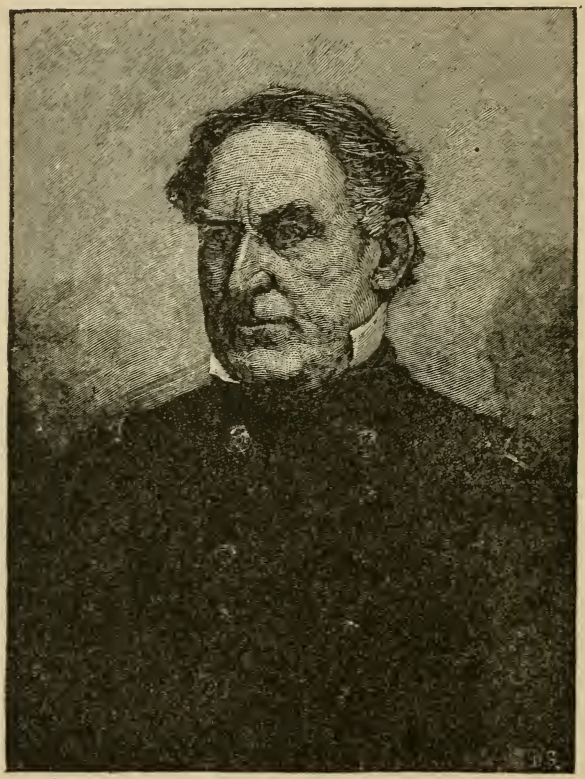
"There's Stanton's navy," said Lincoln.

CHAPTER IV

TOM GOES WEST—WILKES BOOTH HUNTS HIM—DR. HANS ROLF SAVES HIM—HE DELIVERS DISPATCHES TO GENERAL GRANT.

AT the end of the next month, April, 1862, Admiral Farragut gallantly forced open the closed mouth of the Mississippi. He took his wooden ships into action against forts and iron-clad gunboats and captured New Orleans. Within fifteen months thereafter, the North was in practical control of the whole Mississippi. By July, 1863, the Confederacy had been split into two parts, east and west of the "Father of Waters." That was the poetic Indian name of the Mississippi. Farragut's fleet began the driving of the wedge. Grant's army drove it home. When the driving home had just begun, Tom, to his intense delight, was sent West with dispatches for Grant. He left on an hour's notice.

During that hour, a colored servant employed in the White House, whose heart was blacker



ADMIRAL FARRAGUT

than his sooty skin, had left the mansion, had sought a tumble-down tenement in the slums,

and had found there a vulture of a man, very white as to face, very black as to the masses of hair that fell to his shoulders.

"Dat dar boy Strong, he's dun sure goin'," said the darkey, "wid papers fur dat General Grant out West."

"How do you know?"

"Coz I listened to de door, when dey-uns wuz a-talkin'."

"He'll have to go West by Baltimore," mused the white man. "The next train leaves in half an hour. I can make it. Here, Reub, here's your pay."

He took a five-dollar gold piece from his pocket. The negro clutched at it. Then what was left of his conscience stirred within him. He said, pleadingly, hesitatingly:

"Massa, you knows I'se doin' dis coz old Massa told me to. You ain't a-goin' to hurt dat boy Strong, is you? He's a nice boy. Ebery-body lubs him up dar."

"What is it to you, confound you!" snarled the man, "whether I hurt him or not? What's

a boy's life to winning the war? You keep on doing what old Massa told you to do, or I'll cut your black heart out."

With a savage gesture, he thrust the trembling negro out of the dingy room. With savage haste, he packed his scanty belongings. With a pistol in his hip pocket, with a bowie-knife slung over his left breast beneath his waistcoat, with a vial of chloroform in his valise, Wilkes Booth left Washington on the trail of Tom Strong.

Hunter and hunted were in the same car. Tom little dreamed that a few seats behind him sat a deadly foe, who would stick at nothing to get the precious papers he carried. Washington swarmed with Confederate spies. The face of everybody at the White House was well known to every spy. The hunter did not have to guess where the hunted sat.

General Grant had begun his career of victory in the West. It was all-important to the Confederacy to know where his next blow was to

be aimed. The papers in the scout's possession would tell that great secret. Wilkes Booth meant to have those papers soon. As the train bumped over the rough iron rails, towards Baltimore, Booth went to the forward end of the car for a glass of water and as he walked back along the aisle with a slow, lounging step, he stopped where Tom sat and held out his hand, saying:

"How do you do, Mr. Strong? I'm Mr. Barnard. I have had the pleasure of seeing you about the White House sometimes, when I have been calling on our great President. Lincoln will crush these accursed rebels soon!"

It was a trifle overdone, a trifle theatrical. Wilkes Booth could never help being theatrical. His greeting was one of the few times Tom had ever been called "Mister." He felt flattered and took the proffered hand willingly, but he searched his memory in vain for any real recollection of the striking face of the man who spoke to him. There was some vague stirring of memory about it, but certainly this had no relation to that happy life at the White House.

Something evil was connected with it. Puzzled, he wondered. He had seen Booth under arms at John Brown's scaffold, but he did not remember that.

The alleged Mr. Barnard slipped into the seat beside him and began to talk. He talked well. Little by little, suspicion fell asleep in Tom's mind as his companion told of adventures on sea and land. Booth was trying to seem to talk with very great frankness, in order to lure Tom into a similar frankness about himself. He larded all his talk with protestations of fervent loyalty to the Union. Tom bethought himself of a favorite quotation his father often used from Shakespeare's great play of "Hamlet." The conscience-stricken queen says to Hamlet, her son:

"The lady doth protest too much, methinks."

Wilkes Booth was protesting too much. The drowsy suspicion in Tom's mind stirred again. But he was but a boy and Booth was a man, skilled in all the craft of the stage. Once more his easy, brilliant talk lulled caution to sleep.

Tom, questioned so skillfully that he did not know he was being drawn out, little by little told the story of his short life. But the story ended with his saying he was going to Harrisburg "on business." He was still enough on his guard not to admit he was going further than Harrisburg.

"You're pretty young to be on the way to the State Capitol on business," said the skillful actor, hoping to hear more details in answer to the half-implied sneer. But just then Tom remembered what his father had advised: "Never say anything to anybody, unless you are sure the President would wish you to say it." He shut up like a clam. Booth could get nothing more out of him. But he meant to get those dispatches out of him. They were either in the boy's pocket or his valise, probably in his pocket. When he fell asleep, the spy's time would come. So the spy waited.

Darkness came. Two smoky oil-lamps gave such light as they could. The train rumbled on in the night. There were no sleeping cars

then. People slept in their seats, if they slept at all. Booth's tones grew soothing, almost tender. They served as a lullaby. Tom slept. The spy beside him drew a long, triumphant breath. His time had come.

Some time before, he had shifted his traveling-bag to this seat. Now he drew from it, gently, quietly, the little bottle of chloroform and a small sponge, which he saturated with the stupefying drug. Then he slipped his arm under the sleeping boy's head, drew him a little closer to himself, and glanced through the dusky car. Nearly everybody was asleep. Those who were not were trying to go to sleep. No one was watching. Booth pressed the sponge to Tom's nostrils. Tom stirred uneasily. "Sh-sh, Tom," purred the actor, "go to sleep; all's well." The drug soon did its work. The boy was dead to the world for awhile. Only a shock could rouse him.

The shock came. Booth's long, sensitive, skilled fingers—the fingers of a musician—ransacked his coat and waistcoat pockets swiftly, finding nothing. But beneath the waistcoat

their tell-tale touches had detected the longed-for papers. The waistcoat was deftly unbuttoned—it could have been stripped off without arousing the unconscious boy—and a triumphant thrill shot through Booth's black heart as he drew from an inner pocket the long, official envelope that he knew must hold what he had stealthily sought. He was just about to slip it into his own pocket and then to leave his stupefied victim to sleep off the drug while he himself sought safety at the next station, when one of those little things which have big results occurred. The sturdy man who was snoring in the seat behind this one happened to be a surgeon. He was returning from Washington, whither he had gone to operate on a dear friend, a wounded officer. Chloroform had of course been used, but the patient had died under the knife. It had been a terrible experience for the operator. It had made his sleep uneasy. A mere whiff from the sponge Booth had used reached the surgeon's sensitive nostril. It revived the poignant memories of the last few hours. He

awoke with a start that brought him to his feet. And there, just in front of him, he saw by the dim light a boy sunk in stupefied slumber and a man glancing guiltily back as he tried to thrust a stiff and crackling paper into his pocket. The sponge had fallen to the floor, but its fumes, far-spreading now, told to the practiced surgeon a story of foul play. He grabbed the man by the shoulder and awoke most of the travelers, but not Tom, with a stentorian shout: "What are you doing, you scoundrel?"

The scoundrel leaped to his feet, throwing off the doctor's hand, and sprang into the aisle, clutching the long envelope in his left hand, while his right held a revolver. He rushed for the door, pursued by half a dozen men, headed by the doctor. Close pressed, he whirled about and leveled his pistol at his unarmed pursuers. They fell back a pace. He whirled again, stumbled over a bag in the aisle, fell, sprang to his feet once more. A brakeman opened the door. He was hurrying to see what this clamor meant. Wilkes Booth fired at him pointblank. The

bullet missed, but it made the brakeman give way. Booth rushed by him, gained the platform and leaped from the slow train into the sheltering night.

The shock that waked Tom was the sound of the shot. Weak, dizzy, and sick, he knew only that some terrible thing was happening. Instinctively, his hand sought that inner pocket, only to find it empty. Then, indeed, he was wide awake. The horror of his loss burned through his brain. He shouted: "Stop him! Stop thief!" and collapsed again into his seat.

He was in fact a very sick boy. The dose of chloroform that had been given him would have been an overdose for a man. Notwithstanding his awakening, he might have relapsed into sleep and death, had not the skillful surgeon been there to devote himself to him. An antidote was forced down his throat. Willing volunteers, for of course the whole car was now awake in a hurly-burly of question and answer, rubbed life back into him. When he was a bit better, he was kept walking up and down the

aisle, while two strong men held him up and his head swayed helplessly from side to side. But the final cure came when the surgeon who had kept catlike watch upon him saw that he could now begin to understand things.

"Here is something of yours," he whispered into the lad's half-unconscious ear. "That scoundrel stole it from you. When he fell, he must have dropped it on the floor. I found it there after he had jumped off the platform."

Tom's hand closed over the fateful envelope. His trembling fingers ran along its edges. It had not been opened. He had not betrayed his trust. A profound thankfulness and joy stirred within him. Within an hour he was practically himself again. Then he poured out his heart in thanks to the sturdy surgeon who had saved not only his life, but his honor. He asked his name and started at his reply:

"Dr. Hans Rolf, of York, Pennsylvania."

"Dr. Hans Rolf," repeated Tom, "but perhaps you are the grandson of the Hans Rolf I've heard about all my life. My father is always

telling me of things Hans Rolf did for my grandfather and great-grandfather."

"And what is *your* name?" queried the doctor, surprised as may be imagined that this unknown boy should know him so well.

"Tom Strong."

"By the Powers," shouted the hearty doctor, seizing the boy's hand and wringing it as his grandfather used to wring the hand of the Tom Strongs he knew, "By the Powers, next to my own name there's none I know so well as yours. My grandfather never wearied of talking about the two Tom Strongs, father and son. The last day he lived, he told me how your great-grandfather saved his life."

"And you know he saved great-grandfather's, too," answered Tom, "and now you have saved mine."

He looked shyly at his preserver. He was still weak with the after-effects of the drug that had been given him. The Hans Rolf he saw was a bit blurred by the unshed tears through which he saw him.

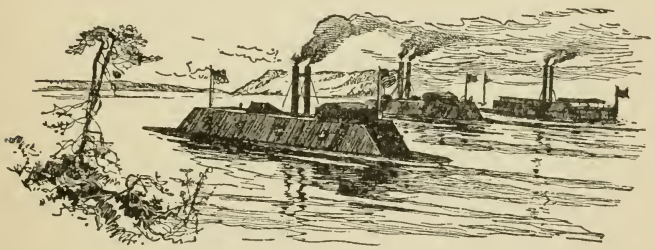
"Nonsense," said the surgeon, "whatever I've done is just in the day's work. But you must stop at York and rest. I can't let my patient travel just yet, you know. And this may be your last chance to see me at home. I go into the army next month."

However, Tom was not to be persuaded to stop. Duty called him Westward and to the West he went, as fast as the slow trains of those days could carry him. But when Hans Rolf and he parted, a few hours after they had met, they were friends for life.

It took Tom two days to get from Harrisburg to Cairo, the southernmost town in Illinois. It lies at the junction of the Mississippi and Ohio rivers. The latter pours a mass of beautiful blue water—the early French explorers named the Ohio "the beautiful river"—into the muddy flood of the Mississippi. For miles below Cairo the blue and yellow streams seem to flow side by side. Then the yellow swallows the blue and the mighty Mississippi rolls its murky way to the Gulf of Mexico. A gunboat took the young

messenger from Cairo to General Grant's headquarters.

A Western gunboat was an odd thing. James B. Eads, an eminent engineer, who after the war built the St. Louis bridge and the New Orleans jetties, which keep the mouth of the Mississippi open, had launched a flotilla of gunboats for



MISSISSIPPI RIVER GUNBOATS

the government within four months of the time when the trees which went to their making were growing in the forests. On a flat-boat of the ordinary Western-river type, Mr. Eads put a long cabin, framed of stout timbers, cut port-holes in the sides, front and rear of it, mounted cannon inside it, covered it with rails outside (later armor-plate was used), and behold, a gun-

boat. The one which sped swiftly with Tom down the Mississippi and waddled slowly with him up the Tennessee, against the current of the Spring freshets, finally landed him at Grant's headquarters.

Tom approached the tent over which headquarters' flag was flying with a beating heart. It beat against the long envelope that lay in the inner pocket of his waistcoat. He was about to finish his task and he was about to see the one successful soldier of the Union, up to that time. The Northern armies had not done well in the East—the defeat had been disgraceful and the panic sickening with the raw troops at Bull Run, Virginia, and little had been gained elsewhere—but in the West Grant was hammering out success. All eyes turned to him.

Upon the top of a low knoll, half a dozen packing-boxes were grouped in front of the tent. Two or three officers, most of them spick and span, sat upon each box except one. Upon that one there lounged a man, thick-set,

bearded, his faded blue trousers thrust into the tops of dusty boots, his blue flannel shirt open at the throat, his worn blue coat carrying on each shoulder the single star of a brigadier-general.

It was General Grant, Hiram Ulysses Grant, now known as U. S. Grant. When the Confederate commander of Fort Donelson had asked him for terms of surrender, he had answered practically in two words: "unconditional surrender." The curt phrase caught the public fancy, and gave his initials a new meaning. He was long known as "Unconditional Surrender" Grant.

Born in Ohio, he had been educated at West Point, had fought well in our unjust war against Mexico, had resigned in the piping times of peace that followed, had been a commercial failure, and was running an insignificant business as a farmer in Galena, Illinois, an obscure and unimportant citizen of that unimportant town, when the Civil War began. Eight years afterwards, he became President of the United States and served as such for eight

years, doing his dogged best, but far less successful as a statesman than he had been as a soldier. He was a patriot and a good man. In the last years of his life, ruined financially by a wicked partner and tortured by the cancer that finally killed him, he wrote his famous memoirs, which netted his family a fortune after the grave had closed upon this great American. He ran a race with Death to write his life. And he won the grim race.

The young second-lieutenant saluted and explained his mission. The long envelope, deeply dented with the mark of Wilkes Booth's dirty thumb and finger, had reached its destination at last. Grant took it, opened it, read it without even a slight change of expression, though it contained not only orders for the future, but Lincoln's warm-hearted thanks for the past and the news of his own promotion to be major-general. Not only Tom, but every member of his staff was watching him. The saturnine face told no one anything. The little he said at the moment was said to Tom.

"The President tells me he would like to have you given a glimpse of the front. Have you had any experience?"

"No, sir."

"When were you commissioned?"

"A week ago, sir."

"Are all the Eastern boys of your age in the army?"

"They would like to be, sir."

"Well," said Grant, with a kindly smile, "perhaps a little experience at the front may make up for the years you lack. Send him to General Mitchell, Captain," he added, turning to a spruce aide who rose from his packing-box seat to acknowledge the command.

"Pray come with me, Mr. Strong," said the captain.

Tom saluted, turned, and followed his guide. A backward glance showed him the general, his eyes now bent sternly upon Lincoln's letter, his staff eyeing him, a group of quiet, silent figures. And that was all that Tom saw, at that time, of the greatest general of our Civil War.

CHAPTER V

INSIDE THE CONFEDERATE LINES—"SAIREY" WARNS TOM—OLD MAN TOMBLIN'S "SETTLEMINT"—STEALING A LOCOMOTIVE—WILKES BOOTH GIVES THE ALARM—A WILD DASH FOR THE UNION LINES.

THREE days afterwards, Tom found himself "on special service," on the staff of Gen. O. M. Mitchell, whose troops were pushing towards Huntsville, Alabama. They occupied that delightfully sleepy old town, the center of a group of rich plantations, April 12, 1862, but Tom was not then with the column. Five days before, with Mitchell's permission, he had volunteered for a gallant foray into the enemy's country. He had taken prompt advantage of Lincoln's hint that he might fight a bit if he wanted to do so. He was to have his fill of fighting now.

Tom was one of twenty-two volunteers who left camp before dawn on April 7, under the command of James J. Andrews, a daredevil of a man, who had persuaded General Mitchell to let him try to slip across the lines with a handful of soldiers disguised as Confederates in order to steal a locomotive and rush it back to the Union front, burning all the railroad bridges it passed. The railroads to be crippled were those which ran from the South to Chattanooga, Tennessee, and from the East through Chattanooga and Huntsville to Memphis. A few miles from camp, Andrews gave his men their orders. They were to separate and singly or in groups of two or three were to make their way to the station of Big Shanty, Georgia, where they were to meet on the morning of Saturday, April 12. Andrews took Tom with him. For two days they hid in the wooded hills by day and traveled by night, guided by a compass and by the stars. Then their scanty supply of food was exhausted and they had to take to the open. Their rough clothing, stained a dusty yellow

with the oil of the butternut, the chief dye-stuff the South then had, their belts with "C.S.A."—"Confederate States of America"—upon them, their Confederate rifles (part of the spoils of Fort Donelson), and their gray slouched hats made them look like the Confederate scouts they had to pretend to be.

Danger lurked about them and detection meant death. They did their best to talk in the soft Southern drawl when they stopped at huts in the hills and asked for food, but the drawl was hard for a Northern tongue to master and more than one bent old woman or shy and smiling girl started with suspicion at the strange accents of these "furriners." The men of the hills were all in the army or all in hiding. On the fourth day they reached a log-hut or rather a home made of two log-huts, with a floored and roofed space between them, a sort of open-air room where all the household life went on when good weather permitted. An old, old woman sat in the sunshine, her hands busy with

a rag quilt, her toothless gums busy with holding her blackened clay pipe. Behind her sat her granddaughter, busy too with her spinning wheel. The two women with their home as a background made a pleasing and a peaceful picture.

"Howdy," said Andrews.

The wheel stopped. The quilt lay untouched upon the old woman's lap. She took her pipe from her mouth.

"Howdy," said she.

The conversation stopped. The hill-folk are not quick of speech.

"Please, ma'am, may I have a drink of milk?" asked Tom.

"Sairey," called the old dame, "you git sum milk."

Sairey started up from her spinning wheel, trying to hide her bare feet with her short skirt and not succeeding, and walked back of the house to the "spring-house," a square cupboard built over a neighboring spring. It was dark and cool and was the only refrigerator the hill-

folk knew. While she was away, her grandmother began to talk. The man and boy would much rather she had kept still. For she peered at them suspiciously, and said:

"How duz I know you uns ain't Yankees? I hearn thar wuz a right smart heap o' Yankee sojers not fur off'n hereabouts."

At this moment Sairey fortunately returned. She brought in her brown hand an old glass goblet, without a standard, but filled to the brim with a foaming mixture that looked like delicious milk. Alas! Tom, who loathed buttermilk, was now to learn that in the hills "milk" meant "buttermilk." He should have asked for "sweet milk." Sairey handed him the goblet with a shy grace, blushing a little as the boy's hand touched hers. He lifted it eagerly to his thirsty lips, took a long draught, and sputtered and gagged. But the mistake was in his asking and the girl had gone a hundred yards to get him what she thought he wanted. He was a boy, but he was a gentleman. He swallowed the nauseous stuff to the last drop, and made his

best bow as he thanked her. Suddenly the old woman said to him:

"Where wuz you born, bub?"

"New—New——" stammered Tom. His tongue did not lend itself readily to a lie, even in his country's cause. When he was still too young to understand what the words meant, his mother had told him: "A lie soils a boy's mouth." As he grew older, she had dinned that big truth into his small mind. Now, taken by surprise, the habit of his young life asserted itself and the tell-tale truth that he had been born in New York was on his unsoiled lips, when Andrews finished the sentence for him.

"New Orleans," said Andrews, coolly.

"He don't talk that-a-way," grumbled the old beldam.

"He was raised up No'th," Andrews explained, "but soon as this yer onpleasantness began, he cum Souf to fight for we-uns."

Andrews had overdone his dialect.

"Sairey," commanded the old woman, "put up the flag."

"Why, granma," pleaded Sairey from where she had taken refuge behind her grandmother's chair, "what's the use?"

"Chile, you hear me? You put up the flag."

From her refuge, Sairey held out her hands in a warning gesture, and then, before she entered one of the log-houses, she pointed to a cart-track that wound up the hill before the hut. She came out with a Confederate flag, made of part of an old red petticoat with white stripes sewn across it. It was fastened upon a long sapling. She put the staff into a rude socket in front of the platform. As she passed Tom in order to do this, she whispered to him: "You-uns run!"

"What wuz you sayin' to Bub, thar?" her grandmother asked in anger.

"I wuzn't sayin' nuthin' to nobuddy," Sarah replied.

But Andrews' ears, sharper than the old woman's, sharpened by fear, had caught the words.

"We-uns'll haf to go," he remarked. "You-

uns haz bin right down good to us. Thanky, ma'am."

"Jes' wait a minute," the old woman answered. "I'll give you somethin' fer yer to eat as ye mosey 'long."

She walked slowly, apparently with pain, into the dark log-room. Sairey wrung her hand and whispered: "Run, run. Take the cart-track." Instantly the grandmother appeared on the threshold, her old eyes flashing, a double-barreled shot-gun in her shaking hands. She tried to cover both man and boy, as she screamed at them:

"You-uns stay in yer tracks, you Yankees! My man'll know what to do with you-uns."

Their guns were at her feet. There was no way to get them, even if they would have used them against a woman.

"Run!" shouted Andrews and bounded towards the cart-track.

Tom sprang after him, but not in time to escape a few birdshot which the old woman's gun sent flying after him. The sharp sting of

them redoubled his speed. The second barrel sent its load far astray. They had run just in time, for from another hilltop behind the hut a dozen armed men came plunging down to the house, shouting after the scared fugitives. The raising of the flag had been the agreed-upon signal for their coming. Sairey's father and several other men had taken to the nearby hills to avoid being impressed into the Confederate army, but they adored the Confederacy, up to the point of fighting for it, and they would have rejoiced to capture Andrews and Tom. The old woman's eyes and ears had pierced the thin disguise of the raiders. So she had forced her granddaughter to fly the flag and the girl, afraid to disobey her fierce old grandmother but loath to see the boy she had liked at first sight captured, had warned him to flee. Man and boy were out of gunshot, but still in sight, when their pursuers reached the house, yelled with joy to see the abandoned guns, and ran up the cart-track like hounds hot upon the scent. As Tom and Andrews panted to the hilltop, they

saw why Sairey had bidden them take the cart-track. At the summit, it branched into half a dozen lanes which wound through a pine forest. Lanes and woodlands were covered with pine-needles, the deposit of years, which rose elastic under their flying feet and left no marks by which they could be tracked. And beyond the forest was a vast laurel-brake in which a regiment could have hidden, screened from discovery save by chance. It gave the fugitives shelter and safety. Once they heard the far-off voices of their pursuers, but only once. Ere many hours they had the added security of the night.

When they found a hiding-place, beside a tiny brook that flowed at the roots of the laurel-bushes, Tom found that his wound, forgotten in the fierce excitement of the flight, had begun to pain him. His left shoulder grew stiff. When Andrews examined it, all it needed was a little care. Three or four birdshot had gone through clothing and skin, but they lay close beneath the skin, little blue lumps, with tiny smears of red blood in the skin's smooth whiteness. They

were picked out with the point of a knife. The cool water of the brook washed away the blood and stopped the bleeding. Andrews tore off a bit of his own shirt, soaked it in the brook, and bandaged the shoulder in quite a good first-aid-to-the-injured way. Tom and he were none the worse, except for the loss of their guns. And that was the less serious because both knives and pistols were still in their belts.

They slept that night in the laurel-brake, forgetting their hunger in the soundness of their sleep. Just after dawn, they were startled to hear a human voice. But it was the voice of a gentle girl. It kept calling aloud "Coo, boss, coo, boss," while every now and then it said in lower tones: "Is you Yanks hyar? Hyar's suthin' to eat." At first they thought it was a trap and lay still. Finally, however, spurred by hunger, they crept out of their hiding-place and found it was Sairey who was calling them. When she saw them, she ran towards them, while the cows she had collected from their pasture stared with dull amazement.

"Is you-uns hurt?" she asked, clasping her hands in anxiety.

Reassured as to this, she produced the cold cornbread and bacon she had taken from the spring-house when she left home that morning for her daily task of gathering the family cows. Man and boy bolted down the food.

"You're good to us, Sairey," said Tom.

"Dunno as I ought to help you-uns," the girl replied, peering slyly out of her big sunbonnet and digging her brown toes into the earth, "but I dun it, kase—kase—I jes' had to. Kin you get away today?"

"We'll try."

"Whar be you goin'?"

Should they tell her where they were going? It was a risk, but they took it. They were glad they did, for Sairey was not only eager to help them on their way, but could be of real aid. Once in her life she had been at Big Shanty. She told them of a short cut through the hills, by which they would pass only one "settle-

mint," as the infrequent clearings in the hills were called.

"When you-uns git to Old Man Tomblin's settle*mint,*" said Sairey, "I 'low you-uns better stand at the fence corner and holler. Old Man Tomblin's spry with his gun sometimes, when furriners don't do no hollerin'. But when he comes out, you-uns tell him Old Man Gernt's Sairey told you he'd take care of you-uns. 'N he will. 'N you kin tell Bud Tomblin—no, you-uns needn't tell Bud nothin'. Good-by."

The hill-girl held out her hand. She looked up to Andrews and smiled as she shook hands. She looked down at Tom—she was half a head taller than he—and smiled again as she shook hands. Then suddenly she stooped and kissed the startled boy. Then she fled back along the lane by which she had come, leaving the placid cows and the thankful man and boy behind her. With a flutter of butternut skirt and a twinkle of bare, brown feet, she vanished from their sight.

Thanks to her directions, they found Old Man Tomblin's settle*mint* without difficulty. They

duly stood at the corner of the sagging rail fence and there duly "hollered." Old Man Tomblin and Bud Tomblin came out of the cabin, each with a gun, and were proceeding to study the "furriners" before letting them come in, when Andrews repeated what Old Man Gernt's Sairey had told them to say. There was an instant welcome. Bud Tomblin was even more anxious than his father to do anything Sairey Gernt wanted done. The fugitives' story that they had been scouting near General Mitchell's line of march and had lost their guns and nearly lost themselves in a raid by Northern cavalry was accepted without demur. Old Mrs. Tomblin, decrepit with the early decrepitude of the hill-folk, whose hard living conditions make women old at forty and venerable at fifty, cackled a welcome to them from the corner of the fire-place where she sat "dipping" snuff. "Lidy" Tomblin, the eldest daughter, helped and hindered by the rest of a brood of children, took care of their comfort. They feasted on the best the humble household had to offer. They slept

soundly, albeit eight other people, including Mr. and Mrs. Tomblin and Lidy, slept in the same room. In the morning they were given a bountiful breakfast and were bidden good-by as old friends.

"I hate to deceive good people like the Tomblins," said Tom, when they were out of earshot.

"Sometimes the truth is too precious to be told," laughed Andrews.

But Tom continued to be troubled in mind as he tramped along. He made up his mind to fight for his country, the next time he had a chance, in some other way. Telling a lie and living a lie were hateful to him.

The next morning found them at Big Shanty, a tiny Georgia village, which the war had made a great Confederate camp. It was the appointed day, Saturday, April 12, 1862. Of the twenty-two men who had started with Andrews, eighteen met that morning at Big Shanty. The train for Chattanooga stopped there for breakfast on those infrequent days when it did not

arrive so late that its stop was for dinner. It was what is called a " mixed " train, both freight and passenger, with many freight cars following the engine and a tail of a couple of shabby passenger cars. On this particular morning it surprised everybody, including its own train-crew, by being on time. Passengers and crew swarmed in to breakfast. The train was deserted. The time for the great adventure had come.

Before the train was seized, one thing must be done. The telegraph wire between Big Shanty and Chattanooga must be cut. If this were left intact, their flight, sure to be discovered as soon as the train-crew finished their brief breakfast, would end at the next station, put on guard by a telegram. To Tom, as the youngest and most agile of the party, the task of cutting the wire had been assigned. He was already at the spot selected for the attempt, a clump of trees a hundred yards from the station, where the wire was screened from sight by the foliage. As soon as the train came in, Tom started to

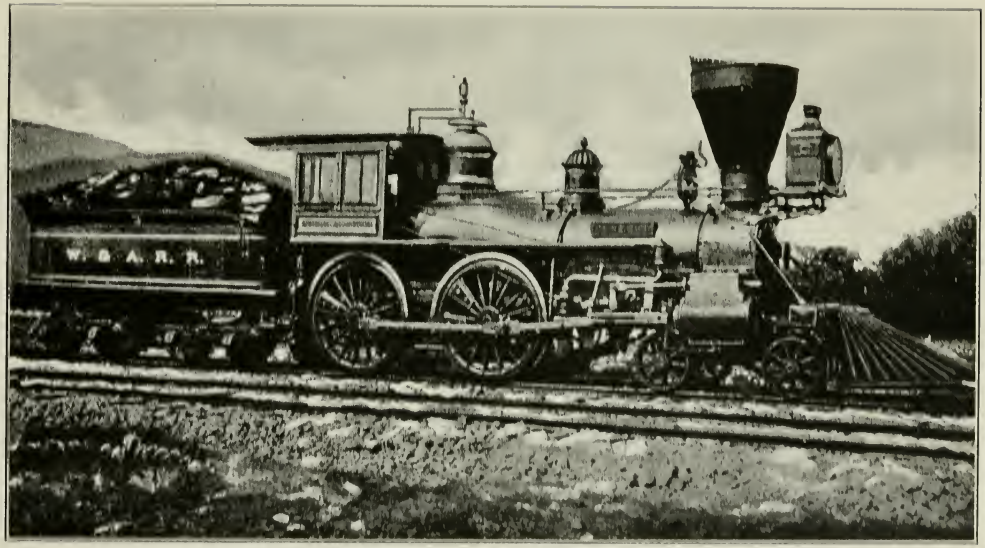
climb the telegraph-pole. He had just started when he heard a most unwelcome sound.

"Hey, thar! What's you doin'?"

He turned his head and saw a Confederate sentry close beside him. He recognized him as a man with whom he had been chatting around a camp-fire early that morning. His name was Bill Coombs. Tom's ready wit stood by him.

"Why, Bill," he said, "glad to see you. Somethin's wrong with the wire. The Cunnel's sent me to fix it. Give me a boost, will ye?"

The unsuspicious Bill gave him a boost and watched him without a thought of his doing anything wrong while Tom climbed to the top of the rickety pole, cut the one wire it carried, fastened the ends to the pole so that from the ground nobody could tell it was cut, and climbed down. Bill urged him to stay and talk awhile, but Tom reminded him that sentries mustn't talk, then he strolled at first and soon ran towards the station. He had to run to catch the train. The instant Andrews saw him returning, he sprang into the cab of the locomotive.



The Locomotive Tom Helped to Steal

One of his men had already uncoupled the first three freight cars from the rest of the train. All the men jumped into the cab or the tender or swarmed up the freight-car ladders. Andrews jerked the throttle wide open. The engine jumped forward, the tender and the three cars bounding after it. The crowd upon the platform gaped after the retreating train, without the slightest idea of what was happening under their very noses. A boy came running like an antelope from the end of the platform. He jumped for the iron step of the locomotive, was clutched by a half-dozen hands and drawn aboard. But as he jumped, he heard a voice he had reason to remember call out:

"They're Yanks. That's Lieutenant Strong, a Yankee! Stop 'em! Shoot 'em!"

Livid with rage, his long black hair streaming in the wind as he ran after them, Wilkes Booth fired his pistol at them, while the motley crowd his cry had aroused sent a scattering volley after the train. Nobody was hurt then, but the danger to everybody had just begun.

There was instant pursuit. The train-crew, startled by the sound of the departing train, came running from the station. They actually started to run along the track after the flying locomotive. They jerked a hand-car off a siding and chased the fugitives with that. At a station not far off, they found a locomotive lying with steam up. They seized that and thundered ahead. Now hunters and hunted were on more even terms. The hunters reached Kingston, Georgia, within four minutes after the hunted had left. The latter had had to make frequent stops, to cut the wires, to take on fuel, to bundle into the freight cars ties that could be used to start fires for the burning of bridges, and to tear up an occasional rail. This last expedient delayed their pursuers but little. When a missing rail was sighted, the Confederates stopped, tore up a rail behind them, slipped it into the vacant place, and rushed ahead again.

Andrews was running the captured train on its regular time schedule, so he could not exceed a certain speed. From Kingston, however,

where the only other train of the day met this one, he expected a free road and plenty of time to burn every bridge he passed. He did meet the regular train at Kingston, but alas! it carried on its engine a red flag. That meant that a second section of the same train was coming behind it. There was nothing to do but to wait for this second section. The railroad was single-track, so trains could pass only where there was a siding. But in every moment of waiting there lurked the danger of detection. Southerners, soldiers, and civilians, crowded about the locomotive as she lay helplessly still on the Kingston sidetrack, puffing away precious steam and precious time.

"Whar's yer passengers?" asked one man. "I cum hyar to meet up with Cunnel Tompkins. Whar's he'n the rest of 'em?"

"We were ordered to drop everything at Big Shanty," explained Andrews, "except these three cars. They're full of powder. I'm on General Beauregard's staff and am taking the stuff to him at Corinth. Jove, there's the

whistle of the second section. I'm glad to hear it."

He was indeed glad. At one of his stops, he had bundled most of his men into the freight cars. The cars were battered old things without any locks. If a carelessly curious hand were to slide back one of the doors and reveal within, not powder, but armed men, all their lives would pay the forfeit. Andrews was in the cab with engineer, fireman, and Tom, who had been helping the fireman feed wood into the maw of the furnace on every mile of the run. His young back ached with the strain of the unaccustomed toil. His young neck felt the touch of the noose that threatened them all.

"Tom, you run ahead and throw that switch for us as soon as the other train pulls in," said Andrews. "We mustn't keep General Beauregard waiting for this powder a minute longer than we can help. He needs it to blow the Yankees to smithereens."

So Tom ran ahead, stood by the switch as the second section came in, and promptly threw

the switch as it passed. But his train did not move and a brakeman jumped off the rear platform of the caboose of the second section, as it slowed down, told Tom he was an ass and a fool, pushed him out of the way and reset the switch.

"You plum fool," shouted the brakeman, after much stronger expressions, "didn't ye see the flag fur section three?"

Tom had not seen it, had not looked for it, but it was too true that the engine of section two also bore the red flag that meant that section three was coming behind it.

Again there was a long wait, again the sense of danger closing in upon them, again the thought of scaffold and rope, again the necessity of playing their parts with laughter and good-natured chaff amid the foes who thought them friends. The slow minutes ticked themselves away. At last the third section came whistling and lumbering in. Thank fortune, it bore no red flag. This time Tom threw the switch unchecked and then jumped on the puffing engine

as she reached the main-track and sped onwards.

"Free, by Jove!" said Andrews, with a deep breath of deep relief. "Now we can burn Johnny Reb's bridges for him!"

Four minutes later, while section three of the train that had so long delayed them was still at Kingston, a shrieking locomotive rushed into the station. Its occupants, shouting a story of explanation that put Kingston into a frenzy, ran from it to an engine that lay upon a second sidetrack, steam up and ready to start. They had reached Kingston so speedily by using their last pint of water and their last stick of wood. They saved precious minutes by changing engines.

Five seconds after their arrival, the station-agent had been at the telegraph-key, frantically pounding out the call of a station beyond Andrews's fleeing train. There was no reply.

"Wire cut!" he shouted, running out of the station. Of course that had been done by the

fugitives just out of sight of Kingston. "Wire cut! I kain't git no message through."

"We'll take the message!" answered the Confederate commander, from the cab of the locomotive that was already swaying with her speed, as she darted ahead.

They came near delivering the message within four miles of Kingston. Andrews's men, with a most comforting sense of safety had stopped and were pulling up a rail, when they heard the whistle of their avenging pursuer.

"Quick, boys, all aboard," Andrews called. "They're closer'n I like to have 'em."

Quickly replacing the rail, the Confederates came closer still. Around the next curve, quite hidden from sight until close upon it, the fugitives had put a rail across the track. It delayed the pursuit not one second. Whether the cow-catcher of the engine thrust it aside or broke it or whether the engine actually jumped it, nobody knew then in the wild excitement of the chase and nobody knows now. The one thing certain is that there was no delay. Very likely

the rail broke. Rails of those days were of iron, not steel, and throughout the South they were in such condition that at the close of the Civil War one of the chief Southern railroads was said to consist of "a right-of-way and two streaks of rust." The locomotive whistled triumphantly and sped on.

On the Union train, Tom had crept back to the rear car along the rolling, jumping car-roofs, with orders to set it on fire and stand ready to cut it off. The men inside arranged a pile of ties, thrust fat pine kindling among them, and touched the mass with a match. It burst into flame as they scuttled to the roof and passed to the car ahead. A long covered wooden bridge loomed up before them. Halfway across it, Andrews stopped, dropped the flaming car, and started ahead again. In a very few minutes the bridge would have been a burning mass, but the few minutes were not to be had. The Confederate locomotive was now close upon them. It dashed upon the bridge, drove the burning car across the bridge before

it, pushed it upon a neighboring sidetrack and again whistled triumphantly as it took up the fierce chase. The two remaining cars were detached, one by one, but in vain. The game was up.

"Guess we're gone," said Andrews, tranquilly, as he looked back over the tender, now almost empty of wood, to the smokestack that was belching sooty vapor within a mile of them. "By this time, they've got a telegram ahead of us. Stop 'round that next curve in those woods. We must take to the woods. Don't try to keep together. Scatter. Steer by the North Star. Make the Union lines if you can. We've done our best."

The engine checked its mad pace, slowed, stopped.

"Good-by, boys," shouted Andrews, as he sprang from the engine and disappeared in the forest that there bordered the track. "We'll meet again."

Seven of them did meet him again. It was upon a Confederate scaffold, where he and they

were hung. The other six of the fourteen who were captured were exchanged, a few months later. Three others reached the Union lines within a fortnight, unhurt. But where was Tom Strong?

CHAPTER VI

Tom up a Tree—Did the Confederate Officer See Him?—A Fugitive Slave Guides Him—Buying a Boat in the Dark—Adrift in the Enemy's Country.

AT first, Tom was up a tree. When he jumped from the abandoned locomotive, his mind was working as quickly as his body. He reasoned that the Confederates would expect them all to run as fast and as far away as they could; that they would run after them; that they would very probably catch him, utterly tired out as he was, so tired that even fear could not lend wings to his leaden feet; that the pursuit, however, would not last long, because the Confederates would wish to reach a station soon, in order both to report their success and to send out a general alarm and so start a gen-

eral search for the fugitives; and that he would best hide as near at hand as might be. In other words, he thought, quite correctly, that the best thing to do is exactly what your enemy does not expect you to do. He picked out a big oak tree quite close to the track, its top a mass of thick-set leaves such as a Southern April brings to a Southern oak. He climbed it, nestled into a sheltered crotch high above the ground, and waited. He did not have to wait long. He could still hear the noise of his comrades plunging through the woods when the Confederate engine drew up beneath his feet. Before it stopped, the armed men who clustered thick upon locomotive and tender were on the ground and running into the woods. A gallant figure in Confederate gray led them. He heard the rush of them, then a shot or two, exultant yells, and ere long the tramp of returning feet. They came back in half a dozen groups, bringing with them three of his comrades in flight, less fortunate than he, at least less fortunate up to that time. Andrews was one of the prisoners. He

had slipped and fallen, had strained a sinew, and had lain helpless until his pursuers reached him. Tom, peering cautiously through his leafy shelter, saw that his late leader was limping and was held upright by a kindly Confederate, who had passed his arm about him.

"'Tain't fur," said his captor, cheerily, "hyar's the injine."

"The Yank's goin' fur," sneered a soldier of another kind, "he's goin' to Kingdom Cum, blast him!" He lifted his fist to strike the helpless man, but the young officer in command caught the upraised arm.

"None of that," he said, sternly. "Americans don't treat prisoners that way. You're under arrest. Put down your gun and climb into the tender. Do it now and do it quick." Sulkily the brute obeyed. "Lift him in," went on the officer to the man who was supporting Andrews. This was gently done. The other two captives climbed in. So did the Confederates. Their officer turned to them.

"You've done your duty well," he said.

"You've been chasing brave men. They've done their duty well too.

"'For such a gallant feat of arms
Was never seen before.'"

Tom started with surprise. The young officer was quoting from Macaulay's "Lays of Ancient Rome." The boy had stood beside his mother's knee when she read him the "Lays" and had often since read them himself.

That start of surprise had almost been Tom's undoing. He had rustled the leaves about him. A tiny shower of pale green things fell to the ground.

"Captain, there's somebody up that tree," said a soldier, pointing straight at the point where Tom sat. "I heard him rustle."

The captain looked up. The boy always thought the officer saw him and spared him, partly because of his youth—he knew the fate the prisoners faced—and partly because of his admiration for "the gallant feat of arms." Be that as it may, he certainly took no step just then to make another prisoner. Instead he laughed and answered:

"That's a 'possum. We haven't time for a coon-hunt just now. Get ahead. We'll send an alarm from the next station and so bag all the Yankees."

The engine, pushing the recaptured one before it, started and disappeared around the end of the short curve upon which Andrews had made his final stop. For the moment at least, Tom was safe. But he knew the hue-and-cry would sweep the country. Everybody would be on the lookout for stray Yankees. And as everybody would think the estrays were all going North, Tom decided to go South. He slid down the tree, looked at his watch, studied the sunlight to learn the points of the compass, drew his belt tighter to master the hunger that now assailed him, and so began his southward tramp, a boy, alone, in the enemy's country.

That part of Georgia is a beautiful country and Tom loved beauty, but it did not appeal to him that afternoon. He was hungry; he was tired; the excitement that had upheld him through the hours of flight on the captured

engine was over. He plodded through a little belt of forest and found himself in a broad valley, with a ribbon of water flowing through it. He stumbled across plowed fields to the little river. A dusty road, with few marks of travel, meandered beside the stream. He was evidently near no main highway. Not far away a planter's home, with a stately portico, gleamed in the sunlight through its screen of trees. In the distance lay a little village. There was food in both places and he must have food. To which should he go? It was decided for him that he was to go to neither. As he slipped down the river bank, to quench his burning thirst and to wash his dusty face and hands, he almost stepped upon a negro who lay full length at the foot of the bank, hidden behind a tree that had been uprooted by the last flood and left stranded there. The boy was scared by the unexpected meeting, but not half as much as the negro.

"Oh, Massa," said the negro, on his knees with outstretched hands, "don' tell on me,

Massa. I'll be your slabe, Massa. Jes' take me with you. Please don't tell on me. You kin make a lot o' money sellin' me, Massa. Please lemme go wid you."

"What is your name?" asked Tom.

"Morris, Massa."

"Where did you come from?"

"From dat house, Massa." He pointed to the big house nearby.

"And what are you doing here?"

Little by little, Morris (reassured when he found Tom was a Northern soldier and like himself a fugitive) told his story. He had been born on this plantation. Reared as a house-servant, he could read a little. He had learned from the newspapers his master took that a Northern army was not far away. He made up his mind to try for freedom. His master kept dogs to track runaways, but no dog can track a scent in running water. It was not probable his flight would be discovered until after night-fall. So he had stolen to his hiding-place in the afternoon, intending to wade down the tiny

stream as soon as darkness came. Two miles below, the stream merged itself into a larger one. There he hoped to steal a boat, hide by day and paddle by night until he reached the Tennessee. "Dat ribber's plum full o' Massa Lincum's gunboats," he assured Tom.

"How are you going to live on the journey?" asked the boy.

"I spec' dey's hen-roosts about," quoth Morris with a chuckle, "and I'se got a-plenty to eat to start wid. Dis darkey don' reckon to starve none."

"Give me something to eat, quick!"

Morris willingly produced cornpone and bacon from a sack beside him. Tom wanted to eat it all, but he knew these precious supplies must be kept as long as possible, so he did not eat more than half of them. The two agreed to keep together in their flight for freedom. As soon as it was dark, they began their wading. The two miles seemed an endless distance. The noises of the night kept their senses on the jump. Once a distant bloodhound's bay scared

Morris so much that his white teeth clattered like castanets. Once the "too-whit-too" of a nearby owl sent Tom into an ecstasy of terror. He fairly clung to Morris, who, just ahead of him, was guiding his steps through the shallow water. When he found he had been scared by an owl, he was so ashamed that he forced himself to be braver thereafter. At last they reached their first goal, the larger river. Here Morris's knowledge of the ground made him the temporary commander of the expedition. He knew of a little house nearby, the home of a "poor white," who earned part of his precarious livelihood by fishing. Morris knew just where he kept his boat. There was no light in the little house and no sound from it as they crept stealthily along the bank to the tree where the boat was tied. Tom drew his knife to cut the rope.

"No, Massa," whispered Morris. "Not dat-a-way. Ef it's cut, dey'll know it's bin tuck and dey'll s'picion us. Lemme untie it. Den dey'll t'ink it's cum loose and floated away. 'N dey'll

not hurry after it. Dey'll t'ink dey kin fin' it in some cove any time tomorrer."

Morris was right. It did not take him long to untie the clumsy knot. Three oars and some fishing-tackle lay in the flat-bottomed boat. They got into it, pushed off, and floated down the current without a sound. Morris steered with an oar at the stern. Once out of earshot, they rowed as fast as the darkness, intensified by the shadows of the overhanging trees, permitted.

Just before they had pushed off, Tom had asked:

"What is this boat worth, Morris?"

"Old Massa paid five dollars fer a new one jest like it, dis lastest week."

Tom's conscience had told him that even though a fugitive for his life in the enemy's country he ought not to take the "poor white's" boat without paying for it. He unbuttoned an inside pocket in his shirt and drew out a precious store of five-dollar gold pieces. There were twenty of them, each wrapped in

tissue-paper and the whole then bound together in a rouleau, wrapped in water-proofed silk, so that there would be no sound of clinking gold as he walked. He figured that the three oars and the sorry fishing tackle could not be worth more than the boat was, so he took out two coins and put them in a battered old pan that lay beside the stump to which the boat was tied. There the "cracker"—another name for the "poor white"—would be sure to see them in the morning. As a matter of fact he did. And they were worth so much more than his vanished property that he was inclined to think an angel, rather than a thief, had passed that way. Tom's conscientiousness spoiled Morris's plan of having the owner think the boat had floated away, but the "cracker" was glad to clutch the gold and start no hue-and-cry. He was afraid that if he recovered his boat, he would have to give up the gold. It was much cheaper to make another. So he kept still.

And still, very still, the fugitives kept as they paddled slowly down the stream until the first

signs of dawn sent them into hiding. They hid the boat in the tall reeds that fringed the mouth of a tiny creek and they themselves crept a few yards into the forest, ate very much less than they wanted to eat of what was left of Morris's scanty store of food, and went to sleep. They slept until—but that is another story.

CHAPTER VII

Towser Finds the Fugitives—Towser Brings Uncle Moses—Mr. Izzard and His Yankee Overseer, Jake Johnson—Tom is Pulled Down the Chimney—How Uncle Moses Choked the Overseer—The Flight of the Four.

THEY slept until late in the afternoon. Then Morris woke up with a yell. A dog's cold nose was thrusting itself against his cheek. He thought his master's bloodhounds were upon him and that the whipping-post was the least he had to fear. As Tom, startled from sound sleep by the negro's scream of terror, sprang to his feet, he saw Morris crouching upon the ground, babbling "Sabe me, good Lord, sabe old Morris!" The dog, a big black-and-yellow mongrel, a very distant cousin of the bloodhound the scared darkey imagined him to be, was looking with a grieved surprise at the cowering man.

He was a most good-natured beast, accustomed to few caresses and many kicks, and he had never before seen a man who was afraid of him. As he turned to Tom, he saw a boy who wasn't afraid of him. Tom, who had always been loved by dogs and children, smiled at the big yellow mongrel, said "Come here, old fellow," and in an instant had the great hound licking his hand and looking up to him with the brown-yellow eyes full of a dog's faith and a dog's fidelity. These are great qualities. A cynic once said: "The more I see of men the more I like dogs." That cynic probably got from men what he gave to them. But still it is true that the unfaltering faith of a dog and a child, once their confidence has been won, is a rare and a precious thing. Tom patted his new friend's head. The big tail wagged with joy. The hound looked reproachfully at Morris, as much as to say: "See how you misunderstood me; I want to be friends: but here"—he turned and looked at the boy who was smiling at him—"here is my best friend."

He stayed with them an hour, contented and

happy, humbly grateful for a tiny piece of meat they gave him. Then, as dark drew near, he became uneasy. Two or three times he started as if to leave them, turned to see whether they were following him, looked beseechingly at them, barked gently, put his big paw on Tom's arm and pulled at him. Evidently he wanted them to come with him, but this they did not dare to do.

"Ef we lets him go, he'll bring his folkses here," Morris whispered.

"I suppose we must tie him up," Tom reluctantly assented. "I hate to treat him that way, for he's a good dog. But if we leave him tied and push off in the boat, he'll howl after a while and his master will find him. Take a bit of fishing-line and tie him."

Morris turned towards the hidden boat, but the hound, as if aware of what they had said, suddenly started for his hidden home and vanished into the underbrush before Tom could catch hold of him. When Tom called, he stopped once and looked back, but he did not

come back. He shouldered his way into the bushes and trotted off, with that amusing air of being in a hurry to keep a most important appointment which all dogs sometimes show. And as he started, Morris appeared again, with a shrill whisper: "De boat's dun sunk hisself."

Tom ran to the bank of the creek. The news was too true. The boat had sunk. The rotten caulking had dropped from one of the rotten seams. The bow, tied to a tree in the canebrake, was high in air. The stern was under five feet of water. The oars had floated away. The fishing-pole was afloat, held to the old craft by the hook-and-line, which had caught in the sunken seat. What were they to do? They felt as a Western trapper used to feel, when he had lost his horse and saw himself compelled to make his perilous way on foot through a country swarming with savage foes. What to do?

"We must raise the boat, Morris, get her on shore, turn her over, caulk her with something, make some paddles somehow and get off."

They did, by great effort and with much more noise than they liked to make, drag the crazy old craft upon the bank of the creek. They turned her bottom-side up. The negro plucked down a long, waving mass of Spanish moss from a cypress that grew in the swampy soil. Children in the South call this Spanish moss "old men's gray beards." Each long drift of it looks as if it might have grown on the chin of an aged giant. They were pressing it into the gaping seam with feverish haste, listening the while for any sign of that dreaded coming of the big hound's "folkses." The short twilight of Southern skies ended. A deep curtain of darkness fell upon them. And through it they heard the nearby patter of the dog's paws and the shuffling footfalls of a man. And they saw the gleam of a lantern.

"We'se diskivered, Massa Tom," old Morris whispered, "we'se diskivered."

As he spoke, he slipped over the bank into the creek and lay in much his attitude when Tom had first "diskivered" him, except that the

water covered all of him except mouth and nose and eyes. Tom bent down to him.

"Hush," he said, "keep still. There's only one man coming. The dog's all right. I'll meet the man. You stay here."

Then he stepped into a circle of light cast by the lantern upon a mass of underbrush and said, with a cheerful confidence he did not feel:

"Howdy, neighbor?"

The big yellow dog was fawning at his feet in a second. A quavering old voice came from behind the light of the lantern.

"Howdy, Massa," it said. "Is I intrudin' on you?"

An old, old negro shambled up to him, the lantern in one hand, a ragged hat in another. He bowed his crown of white kinky hair respectfully before the white boy. There was no enemy to be feared here. The boy's heart bounded with relief and he laughed as he answered:

"No, Uncle, you're not intruding. I'm glad to

see you. I'm sure you'll help us. Come here, Morris."

Morris scrambled up the bank, the wettest man in the world. His eyeballs shone as he neared them. They shone still more as he stood before the old negro, held out his hand, and said:

"Unk' Moses, I'se po'erful glad to meet up wid you."

Uncle Moses almost dropped his rude lantern in his surprise.

"Well, ef it ain't Massa Pinckney's Morris! Howdy, Morris? How cum so as you-uns is here, a-hidin'? I know'd de way dat ar Towser wuz a-actin' when he dun cum home dat dere wuz sum-un in de bush out hyar, but I neber s'picioned t'wuz you, Morris. Is you dun run away?"

The situation was soon explained. Uncle Moses had already become familiar with it. Hunted men, both white and black, were no novelty to him by that time. He had helped many of them on their scared way. Too old to work, he lived alone in a little cabin on the out-

skirts of his owner's plantation. He tilled a tiny plot of vegetables when "de rumatiz" permitted and with these and some rations from "de big house" he eked out a scanty living. This owner's self-respect had not prevented his working Moses through all a long life, with no payment except food and lodging, and behind these always the shadow of the whip. But the slave's self-respect required him to work for the hand that fed him, so long as failing strength permitted. All he could do now was to scare crows from the cornfield, but that he could do well, for his one suit of the ragged remains of what had been several other people's clothes made him a perfect scarecrow. Besides his vegetables, he had some chickens, a sacred possession. "Old Unk' Mose" was known and respected through all the countryside. No chicken-thief ever came to his cabin. The kind old patriarch was reaping the reward of a kind long life. He dwelt in peace.

He took Tom and Morris to the lonely cabin and treated them there with a royal hospitality.

Despite his protests, Tom was obliged to take the one bed. Unk' Mose and Morris slept upon the floor. First, they had a mighty dinner. Two of Moses's fattest chickens and everything Moses had in the way of other food filled their starved stomachs. Then to sleep. The last thing Tom heard that night was the swish of Towser's mighty tail upon the earthen floor as the dog lay beside his cot. The last thing of which he was conscious was Towser's gently licking the hand that hung down from the cot.

The next day they toiled with such feeble help as Moses could give them upon their leaky boat. They put it in fair shape and then, with a rusty ax which was one of Unk' Mose's most precious possessions, they fashioned a couple of rough oars. Then they spent a day trying to persuade Moses to seek freedom with them. It was in vain.

"I'se too old, Massa Tom," said Uncle Moses. "Dey wuz timeses when I dun thought all de days and dun prayed all de nights dat freedum'd cum along or dat I cud go to freedum. It's too

late nowadays. Unk' Mose mus' jes' sot hyar, a-waitin'. P'raps, ef I keeps a-helpin' udder folkses to find deir freedum, p'raps sum day, 'fore I'se troo' a-waitin', de angel ob de Lawd'll cum a-walkin' up to my do' and he'll be a-holdin' by de han' ob a great big udder angel 'n de udder angel he'll dun smile at me and say: 'Unk' Moses, I'se Freedum 'n I'se cum to you.' Den I'll say: 'Thank de good Lawd,' and I'll be so happy I guess I'll jes' die 'n go to de great White Throne, whar ebberybody's free."

Late that afternoon when they had had to give up the hope of taking Uncle Mose with them, they were making a bundle of the food he had given them. It was a big bundle. He would have slaughtered his last chicken for them, had they permitted it. Suddenly there came the sound of a long, shrill whistle. Uncle Moses, tying up the bundle on his knees, forgot "de rumatiz" and almost sprang to his feet.

"Lawd-a-massy, dat's de oberseer! He's dun callin' de hands to de quarters." The quarters were the slave-quarters which always clustered

at a respectful distance in the rear of a planter's home. "Dat ar oberseer mebbe'll cum hyar. You folkses mus' hide."

The whistle had sounded dangerously near. As they looked out of the one door that gave light to the slave's cabin, they saw three horsemen trotting towards it, two white men and a negro. They were Moses's master, the dreaded overseer, and a groom. It was impossible to run across the small cleared space about the cabin and seek the woods without being seen. But where could they hide in a one-roomed hut?

"De chimbley, quick, de chimbley," gasped Uncle Mose.

A big chimney, full of the soot of many years of wood-fires on the broad hearth below, filled half one side of the room. Tom and Morris rushed to it, climbed up the rough stone sides, found a precarious footing just above the fireplace, and waited. Fortunately the fire upon which the food for the journey had been cooked had almost died down. A little smoke floated up the wide opening. The smoke and the soot

tickled the boy's nostrils until it seemed to him that he must sneeze. A sneeze might mean death. With a mighty effort he kept still for what seemed to him an hour. It was really about five minutes.

Mr. Izzard, owner of Uncle Moses and of some hundreds of other black men, Jake Johnson, his overseer, a renegade Yankee, with a face that told of the cruel soul within him, trotted up to the door, the black groom a few yards behind them. Uncle Moses had thrust the bundle of food far back under the bed. He stood respectfully in his doorway, bowing to the ground. Towser cowered beside him. Towser had felt more than once the sting of the long whip Jake Johnson carried. He feared and he hated the overseer.

"Howdy, Massa Izzard?" said Moses. "Howdy, Mista Johnsing? Will you-uns light down 'n cum in?"

"Howdy, Uncle Moses?" Mr. Izzard replied. He was a tall, pale, well-born, well-bred, well-educated man, as kind a man as ever held his

fellowmen in slavery, and as sure that he was justified in doing so by the laws of both God and man as the German emperor was that he ruled a subject people by divine right. "No, we won't light down. We just came to say howdy. Are you getting on all right? If you want anything, come up to the big house and ask for it."

He smiled and the overseer scowled upon the old negro as he stammered a few words of thanks. Suddenly the overseer asked:

"Have you seen anything of Mr. Pinckney's Morris, Mose?"

"No, sah, Mista Johnsing, sah, I ain't seen hide nor har ob Morris. Has dat fool nigger runned away?"

Johnson looked at him sharply.

"If I thought you knew already he had run away," said he, "I'd"—he cracked his whip in the air to show what he would have done.

Moses and Towser cowered. But Mr. Izzard told Johnson to stop frightening "the best darkey on the place" and they rode away.

Mose dropped upon his one chair and was just about to give fervent thanks for the escape from detection, when Johnson, who had turned a short distance away and had galloped back, flung himself off his horse at the door and strode into the dusky hut.

"I b'lieve you know something about that Morris," he roared at the shrinking old negro. "You looked guilty. Tell me what you know or I'll thrash you within an inch of your black life." He cracked his dreaded whip again.

"I dun know nothin' 'bout him, Mista Johnsing," Moses pleaded.

Alas, at that moment, smoke and soot proved too much for the overtried nostrils of Tom. He sneezed with the vigor of a sneeze long held back. His "at-choo! at-choo!" sounded down the chimney like a chorus of bassoons. Johnson was across the room in a bound. He knelt upon the hearth, groped up the chimney, caught the boy by the ankle and pulled him down. The soot had made a negro of Tom. The overseer was sure he had caught the fleeing Morris.

At that terrible moment, when Johnson's throat was swelling for a yell of triumph that would surely have brought Mr. Izzard back to the hut, Uncle Moses cast the traditions of a life of servile fear of the white man behind him. Never had he dreamed of laying a finger on one of his owner's race, even in those long-ago days when stout thews and muscles made him fit to fight. Now, in trembling old age, the truth of the poet's saying,

"Who would be free, himself must strike the blow,"

put spirit for a second into his old heart. He knew the danger that lay in that yell. He meant to stop it, cost him what it might. Johnson was still on his knees in the ashes, still clutching Tom's ankle, the boy still sprawling on the hearth, half-dazed with the shock of discovery and of his fall, when Uncle Moses's withered old body hurled itself upon the overseer's broad back and his feeble fingers clutched the man's windpipe and choked him into a second's silence. That second was enough. Tom sprang to his feet and sprang at his foe like a wildcat, and good

old Towser, rejoicing in the vengeance that beckoned to him, sunk his teeth in Johnson's shoulder and tore him down from the back while Tom struck his strongest just below the overseer's chin and knocked him out for the time being. Before he came to, he had been lashed hand-and-foot into a long bundle, had been effectually gagged with his own whip, had been blindfolded and had been rolled beneath the bed, from under which the food had been hurriedly withdrawn. Meanwhile Morris had neither been seen nor heard. Tom called up the chimney to him to come down.

"I kain't, Massa Tom," said a stifled voice. It had never occurred to Morris to slip down and help in the fight he heard going on below. His one thought had been to escape himself. So he had climbed still higher up the chimney and in his frantic haste he had so wedged himself into it that it took Tom an hour to pull him down. It was a battered, bruised, and bleeding negro who finally appeared. That was a very long hour. Mr. Izzard might return in search

of his overseer at any moment. The overseer himself must be conscious by this time. His ears must have told him much. Tom whispered to Morris and Moses to say nothing. His anxious gesture toward the bed beneath which Johnson lay frightened both negroes into scared silence. Fortunately for them the overseer's ears had told him nothing. Towser's teeth had drawn so much blood—the mighty hound had been pried off his foe with difficulty—that the man lay in a faint until the four fugitives had fled. For there were four fugitives now. Neither Moses nor Towser could stay to face the coming wrath. The rest of Moses's chickens were killed, the rest of his vegetables gathered. When darkness fell, the old flat-boat, laden until she had a scant two inches of free-board above the water, was slipping down the river again. Uncle Moses was no longer "a-waitin' fer freedum." He was going in search of the freedom he had so long craved. He and his fellows had two clear days in which to get away without pursuit, for Johnson lay in his dark prison be-

neath the bed for forty-eight hours before he was found. One of the ropes used to bind him had caught upon an old nail in the wall. He was too weak to tear it away and so could not even roll himself to the outer air. On the second day of his unexplained absence, Mr. Izzard had sent all the negroes in search of him and had offered a reward for his finding. The discovery of his horse in a distant part of the plantation had concentrated the search there. The darkies who finally got the reward did not rejoice much in it, for in finding the overseer, they knew they were finding a cruel taskmaster and his cruel whip. But the story of his discomfiture by three negroes, for he had never known that Tom's sooty face was really white, soon spread through the countryside. He became a neighborhood joke and in his wrath at being made a butt he resigned as Mr. Izzard's overseer. Leaving this place deprived him of his immunity from conscription. He was promptly seized by the nearest Confederate officer and impressed into the army. The Izzard negroes

had the infinite joy of seeing their hated ex-overseer marched off under guard to a Confederate camp, to serve as a private soldier.

Tom was destined to see Jake Johnson again.

Two nights they rowed down the river, almost without a word, afraid to speak lest someone in the infrequent houses and still more infrequent villages along the banks should hear them. Wise old Towser knew enough not to bark when men about him kept so still. He lay always where with nose or paw or tail he could touch Tom. The latter was the commander of the expedition and Towser felt it and became his abject slave accordingly. At the close of the second night they had reached the Tennessee River. By day they camped upon shore in some hidden place, first craftily secreting the boat amid rushes and reeds. From their second hiding-place, they saw about noon a Confederate gunboat, a small stern-wheel steamboat, with cotton-bales at her bow and stern screening her two guns. Though she was making

all possible speed up the current, she moved but slowly. Her decks were thick with excited men. A babble of voices reached the fugitives, peering at her behind a mass of bushes. The few words that could be made out told them nothing. The sight of her, however, warned them that a new danger might await them on the traveled waters of the Tennessee. Their hearts would have beat higher, had they known that General Mitchell had pushed south from Huntsville and that Union forces were then encamped in strength upon the river, not many miles below where they were cowering. The Confederate gunboat had been steaming upstream to escape capture.

When darkness came, they embarked again upon what proved to be the last chapter in the history of the old flat-boat. The next morning, caught in an eddy at the mouth of a small, swift tributary of the Tennessee, she whirled about, the Spanish moss dropped out of her rotten seams, she filled and sank. She dropped so swiftly beneath them that before they realized

their danger they were all floundering in water over their heads. Tom could swim like a fish. That is one of the first things a boy should learn to do. To his delight, he found Uncle Moses was also surprisingly at home in the water, considering his years. Towser accepted the situation as something he did not understand, but which was doubtless entirely all right, as his lord and master, Tom, was in the water too. Morris, however, could not swim a stroke and saw only certain death before him. He gave a yell of terror as he went under. That yell came near costing them dear. As he rose to the surface, Tom on one side and Uncle Mose on the other, acting under Tom's instructions, edged a shoulder under him, and started to swim to shore with him. Again he yelled. This time Moses lost patience.

"Shet up, you fool nigger. You sho'ly needs to be 'mersed."

With this whispered menace, he reached up one hand and ducked Morris's head quite under water. That stopped all further sound from

him. And by this time their feet had touched bottom. They waded ashore, with Towser wagging a triumphant tail, shaking himself and sending showers of spray over them. There they stood, wet as water-rats, with nothing in the world except the dripping clothes they wore. And there was no hiding-place near. For half a mile on either side of them a cleared field lay open to the day and the day was upon them. They had tempted Fate by rowing on too long after the first signs of dawn. Fate had turned the trump upon them. The sun rolled up above the eastern horizon at their back. It showed them, not half a mile away, a plantation house. It showed them a swarm of field-hands coming to the day's toil. It showed them a mounted overseer, only a few hundred feet away, riding up to the flat range of the field from a ravine that had hidden him. He had heard Morris's yells. He saw the three and rode furiously at them, calling out:

"What are you niggers doin' here?"

Tom stepped forward to meet him. His two

companions were useless in an emergency like this. They cowered back and were dumb. Towser strode ahead beside Tom and barked. The overseer pulled up short. He saw he was dealing with a white man, or rather with a white boy. The circumstances were suspicious. Who were these three dripping ragamuffins? But since one of them was white, the man's tone changed and he modified his question.

"Who are ye? And what are ye doin' here?"

"I am on my way to Vicksburg," Tom answered, "by the river. My boat sunk just off shore here and we swam ashore. Can you give me another boat?"

"I mout 'n I moutn't."

"I am carrying dispatches," said Tom, sternly. "You will delay me at your peril. I shall take one of those boats, whether you consent or not."

With this he pointed at the most encouraging thing the sunrise had shown him. This was a line of three boats fastened to a wooden landing-place by the river.

"I b'lieve you're a Yankee," said the horseman, "and these are runaway niggers. You and they must come up to the big house with me. If you're all right, we'll send you on your way. If you're not, well, we know what to do with Yanks and runaway niggers! March!"

He slipped his hand behind him, as if to draw a pistol. Tom was already making the same gesture. Neither of them had a pistol. Tom's had gone to the bottom. It was pure bluff on both sides. And in a moment, seeing this and being Americans, both laughed. But none the less the overseer demanded that they should go to the big house. Tom, protesting, but apparently half-yielding, edged along until he was near the landing-platform. Then, shouting "Come on, boys!" he ran to it, the frightened negroes following at his heels and Towser running ahead. He hustled them into the boat at the eastern end of the pier, jumped in himself, jerked the rope off the wooden peg that insecurely held it, and pushed off. The overseer, angrily protesting, stood a moment watching his

prey escape and then galloped like mad for the big house, shouting "Yanks! spies!! thieves!!! Yanks!!!!" He was met halfway by half a dozen men in Confederate gray, roused by his yells. They were officers who had spent the night at the hospitable house, had breakfasted at daybreak, and were just about to mount for their day's march when the overseer gave the alarm. It was lucky for the fugitives that officers do not carry anything bigger than pistols. A fusillade of revolver-bullets all fell short of the fleeing mark. Tom and Morris were pulling an oar apiece—they had found but two in the boat—with a desperate energy. But it was unlucky for the fugitives that they had not thought to steal or to scuttle the other two boats. This was Tom's fault, for he was captain.

"I'll know better next time," said Tom to himself ruefully, as he saw three men spring into each boat for the pursuit. "I'll know better next time—if there ever is a next time."

It did not seem likely that there would be a next time. One of the pursuing boats fell be-

hind, to be sure. In it, too, there were but two oars and the men who plied them could not match the black man and the white boy who rowed for freedom's sake and life's sake. But in the other boat, two strong men each pulled two oars, while the third man crouched in the bow, pistol in hand, calling out steering instructions. This boat gained upon them, bit by bit. The fugitives could hear the lookout call "Port, hard-a-port!" and could almost see the extra weight thrown into the sweep of the starboard oars to send the boat's head the right way. Once the man at the bow took a chance on a long shot. His bullet fell harmlessly two hundred feet astern of Towser who stood in the stern of the fleeing boat, barking savagely. Thrice they turned a sharp bend and were out of sight of their enemy for a moment, but each time there was a shorter interval before the enemy shot into sight behind them. A fourth point lay just ahead. Tom looked back over his shoulder and measured the distance with his eye.

"We can just make that next point," he panted. "Soon as we do, we'll land and run. It's our only chance."

"I kain't run," said Uncle Moses, "but you'se right, Massa Tom. Dey'll catch us ef we keep a-rowin'."

They had almost reached the bend. Another strong pull would have sent them around it. But the pursuers had now so gained upon them that the lookout chanced another shot. By chance or by skill, it was a very good shot. The bullet struck Tom's oar, just above the blade. The blade dropped off as Tom was putting every ounce of his failing strength into a prodigious pull. The handle, released from all pressure, flew through the air and Tom rolled over backwards into Morris's lap. There was a shout of triumph from astern. The rowers bent to their work with a fierce vigor, feeling the victory won. Morris gave one last pull with his one oar and it sent the boat around the bend.

"And dere," as Uncle Moses with widespread arms used to tell the tale thereafter, "and dere

wuz Massa Lincum's gunboats, a-crowdin' ob de ribber—'n de Stars-'n-Stripeses, dey jest kivered de sky!"

And so Unk' Mose and Morris came to their freedom and Tom came to his own. Towser became Tom's own. Uncle Moses insisted upon this and Towser highly approved of it. The giant hound worshiped the boy. Morris was speedily put to work driving a four-mule team for the commissary department of General Mitchell's force. He was accustomed to having food and lodging doled out to him, so it seemed quite natural to be given sleeping quarters (usually under the canvas cover of the wagon he drove) and rations, but it took him some months to recover from the shock of actually being paid wages for his work. When this too became natural, he felt that he was really free. Uncle Moses was too old for that sort of thing. He was bewildered by the rough and teeming life of an army-camp. He clung to Tom, was as devoted to him as Towser was, and much more helpless than the dog was. Towser made

friends and important friends at once. It happened that food was rather short at headquarters the day after the fugitives found safety. Tom, waiting for a chance to go North, had been

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asked to share the tent of a staff-officer and to eat at headquarters' mess. An hour before dinner, one of his hosts was bewailing the scanty fare they were to have when Towser sidled around the corner of the tent with a fat chicken

in his mouth and laid it with respectful devotion at his master's feet. There was a shout of applause and a roar from the assembled officers of "Good dog, good dog, Towser, do it again!" Whereupon, after some majestic wags of his mighty tail, he disappeared for a few minutes and did do it again. When the second chicken was laid at Tom's feet, Towser's position was assured. He was named an orderly by acclamation and was given a collar made of an old army belt, with the magic letters "U. S. A." upon it, a collar which he wore proudly through his happy life.

Tom, who felt quite rich when his arrears of pay were handed him, decided to give himself a treat by making Uncle Moses happy. That is the best kind of treat man or boy can give himself. Make somebody else happy and you will be happy yourself. Try it and see. So, when he finally started back for Cairo and Washington he took both Uncle Moses and Towser with him. Neither of them had ever been on a railroad train before. Equally bewildered and

equally happy, they sped by steam across the thousand miles between Cairo and Washington. In those days dogs could travel with their masters, without being banished to the baggage-car. As the three neared the latter city, the great dome of the Capitol sprang into sight. Tom eagerly pointed it out.

"Look, Uncle Mose, look, Towser, there's the Capitol."

"Dat's Freedum's home," murmured Unk' Mose.

And Towser, stirred by the others' emotion, barked joyfully. He felt at home, too, because he was with Tom.

CHAPTER VIII

LINCOLN SAVES JIM JENKINS'S LIFE—NEWSPAPER ABUSE OF LINCOLN—THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION—LINCOLN IN HIS NIGHT-SHIRT—JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL—"BARBARA FRIETCHIE"—MR. STRONG COMES HOME—THE RUSSIAN FLEET COMES TO NEW YORK—A BACKWOODS JUPITER.

TOM neared the White House with a beating heart. He had done what Lincoln had bade him do. The dispatches had been carried safely and had been put into General Grant's hands. But he had taken a rather large advantage of the President's smiling suggestion that he might occasionally slip into a fight if he wanted to do so. He had volunteered to go with Andrews on the railroad raid, which was to take a week, and he had been away for many weeks, during which he had been carried on the army-rolls as "miss-

ing." Would the President think of him as a truant, who had run away and stayed away from duty? John Hay's welcome of him was frigid. The boy's heart went down into his boots. But it sprang up into his mouth when he was ushered into Lincoln's room, to be greeted with the winning smile he knew so well and to be congratulated both on his bravery in going with Andrews and on his good fortune in finally getting back to the Union lines.

The President was not alone when Tom entered the room. There sat beside the desk a middle-aged woman, worn and weary, her eyes red with weeping, her rusty black dress spotted with recent tears. Her thin hands were nervously twisting the petition someone had prepared for her to present to the President. She looked at him with heartbroken pleading as he turned to her from Tom and resumed his talk with her which Tom's entrance had interrupted.

"So Secretary Stanton wouldn't do anything for you, Mrs. Jenkins?" he asked.

"No, sir; no, Mr. President," sobbed the

woman. "He said—he said it was time to make an example and that my boy Jim ought to be shot and would be shot at—at—sunrise to-morrow."

The sentence ended in a wail and the woman crumpled up into a heap and slid down to the floor at the President's feet. She had gained one moment of blessed oblivion. Jim, "the only son of his mother and she a widow," had overstayed his furlough, had been arrested, hurried before a court-martial of elderly officers who were tired of hearing the frivolous excuses of careless boys for not coming back promptly to the front, had been found guilty of desertion, and had been sentenced to be shot in a week. Six days the mother had haunted the crowded anteroom of the stern Secretary of War, bent beneath the burden of her woe. Admitted at last to his presence, her plea for her boy's life had been ruthlessly refused.

"The life of the nation is at stake, madam," Stanton had growled at her. "We must keep the fighting ranks full. What is one boy's life

to that of our country? It is unfortunate," the grim Secretary's tones grew softer at the sight of the mother's utter anguish, "it is unfortunate that the life happens to be that of your boy, but an example is needed and an example there shall be. I will do nothing. He dies at sunrise. Good-day."

He rang the bell upon his desk. The sobbing mother was ushered out and the next person on the list was ushered in. An hour afterwards she was with Lincoln. There was no six days' wait at the White House for the mother of a Union soldier.

When she fell to the floor in a faint, Tom sprang to help her, but the President was quicker than he. Lincoln's great arms lifted her like a child and laid her upon a sofa. He touched a bell and sent word to Mrs. Lincoln asking her to come to him. When she did so, she took charge of Mrs. Jenkins and speedily revived her. But it was the President, not his wife, who completed the cure and saved the weeping woman's reason from wreck and her

life from long anguish. He pointed to the petition which had fallen from her nerveless fingers to the floor.

"Hand me that paper, Tom."

He put on his spectacles and started to read it. The glasses grew misty with the tears in his eyes. He wiped them with a red bandanna handkerchief, finished reading the paper, and wrote beneath it in bold letters: "This man is pardoned. A. Lincoln, Prest." Then he held the petition close to the sofa so that the first thing Mrs. Jenkins saw as she came back to consciousness in Mrs. Lincoln's arms was Jim Jenkins's pardon. It was that blessed news which made her herself again. She broke into a torrent of thanks, which Lincoln gently waved aside.

"You see, ma'am," said the President, "I don't believe the way to keep the fighting ranks full is to shoot one of the fighters, 'cause he's been a bit careless. There's a Chinese proverb: 'Never drown a boy baby.' I guess that means that if a boy makes a mistake, it's better to give

him a chance not to make another. You tell Jim from me to do better after this. Tom, you take Mrs. Jenkins over to the Secretary and show him that little line of mine. He won't like it very much. Usually he has his own way, but sometimes I have mine and this happens to be one of those times. Glad you came to see me, Mrs. Jenkins. There's lots of things you can do to an American boy that are better than shooting him. Here's a little note you can read later, ma'am. Hope it'll help you a bit. Good-by—and God bless you."

Tom took the widow Jenkins, dazed with her happiness, to the War Department, where the formal order was entered that sent Jim Jenkins back to the front, resolute to pay his country for the life the President had given him. Only when the order had been entered did the mother remember the envelope clutched in her hand which the President had given her. It contained no words, unless it be true that "money talks." It held a twenty-dollar bill. Mrs. Jenkins had spent her last cent on her journey to Washing-

ton and her six days' stay there. Abraham Lincoln's gift sent her safely back to home and happiness. When once again she had occasion to weep over her son, a year later, her tears were those of a hero's mother. For Jim Jenkins died a hero's death at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, on July 4, 1863, that day of " the high tide of the Confederacy," when Robert E. Lee, the great Confederate commander, saw the surge of his splendid soldiers break in vain upon the rocks of the Union line, in the heart of the North. The bullet that killed Jim Jenkins tore through the picture of Abraham Lincoln Jim always wore over his heart. And Lincoln found time in that great hour of the country's salvation to turn aside from the myriad duties of every day long enough to write Jim Jenkins' mother a letter about her dead son's gift of his life to his country, a letter of a marvelous sympathy and of a wondrous consolation, which was buried with the soldier's mother not long afterwards, when she rejoined in a world of peace her soldier son.

Mrs. Jenkins's experience with Stanton was a typical one. Everybody hated to come in contact with the surly Secretary. One day, when Private Secretary Nicolay was away, Hay came into the offices with a letter in his hand and a cloud on his usually gay brow. "Nicolay wants me to take some people to see Stanton," he said. "I would rather make the tour of a smallpox hospital."

Lincoln always shrank from studying the records of court-martials, but he often had to do so, that justice or injustice might be tempered by mercy. He caught at every chance of showing mercy. A man had been sentenced to be shot for cowardice.

"Oh, I won't approve that," said the President. "'He who fights and runs away, may live to fight another day.' Besides, if this fellow is a coward, it would frighten him too terribly to shoot him."

The next case was that of a deserter. After sentence, he had escaped and had reached Mexico.

"I guess that sentence is all right," Lincoln commented. "We can't catch him, you see. We'll condemn him as they used to sell hogs in Indiana, 'as they run.'"

At this time the fortunes of war were not favoring the North. There were days of doubt, days almost of despair. A shrill chorus of abuse of the President sounded from many Northern newspapers. Its keynote was struck by Horace Greeley, the editor of the New York *Tribune* and the foremost man in a group of great editors such as the country has never seen since. They were Horace Greeley of the *Tribune,* Henry J. Raymond of the New York *Times,* and Samuel Bowles of the Springfield (Mass.) *Republican.* Bowles wrote: "Lincoln is a Simple Susan"; Raymond demanded that he be "superseded" as President; and Greeley, in a letter that was published in England and that greatly harmed the Union cause, said Lincoln ruled "a bleeding, bankrupt, almost dying country."

In Tom's boyhood, the names of the three

were household words and names by which to conjure. The arrows the three shot at Lincoln pierced his heart, but his gentle patience never gave way. He bore with their well-meant but unjust criticism as he bore with so much else in those dark days, careless of hurt to himself, if he could but serve his country and do his duty as he saw it to do. A clear light shone upon one great duty and this he did. On September 22, 1862, he signed his famous Emancipation Proclamation, which with its sequence the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States ended forever slavery wherever the Stars-and-Stripes waved. In the early days of that great September, even a boy could feel in the tense atmosphere of the White House that some great event was impending. Nobody knew upon just what the master mind was brooding, but the whole world was to know it soon. It was not until Lincoln had written with his own hand in the solitude of his own room the charter of freedom for the Southern slaves that he called together his Cabinet, not to ad-

vise him about it, but to hear from him what he had resolved to do. The messenger who summoned the Cabinet officials to that historic session was none other than Uncle Moses. Tom of course had long since told the story of his flight for freedom, including Unk' Mose's stout-hearted attack at the very nick of time upon the overseer. Lincoln was touched by the tale of the old negro's fine feat. He had Tom bring Moses to see him and Moses emerged from that interview the proudest darkey in the world, for he was made a messenger and general utility man at the White House. Part of his duty was to keep in order the room where the Cabinet met and to summon its members when a meeting of it was called. Uncle Moses, pacing slowly but majestically from the White House to the different Departments, bearing a message from the President to his Cabinet ministers, was a very different person from the Unk' Mose who had cared for Tom and Morris in the Alabama cane-brake. The scarecrow had become a man. On these little journeys, Tad Lincoln often

went with him, his small white hand clutching one of Mose's big gnarled, black fingers. Although Moses knew nothing of it at the time, the day he bore the summons to the meeting at which the Proclamation that freed his race was read was the great day of his life. It is well for any man or boy even to touch the fringe of a great event in the world's history.

"I dun car'd de freedum Proc-a-mation," Uncle Moses used to say with ever-deepening pride as the years rolled by. In his extreme old age, he came to think he really had carried the Proclamation to the Cabinet, instead of simply summoning the Cabinet to the meeting at which the Proclamation was first read. Memory plays queer tricks with the old. So Unk' Mose's tale lost nothing in the telling, year after year.

The next evening the Cabinet gathered at a small party at the residence of Salmon P. Chase, Secretary of the Treasury. John Hay was there. He wrote that evening in his diary: "They all seemed to feel a sort of new and ex-

hilarated life; they breathed freer; the President's Proclamation had freed them as well as the slaves. They gleefully and merrily called themselves Abolitionists and seemed to enjoy the novel accusation of appropriating that horrible name." The Proclamation made it respectable to be an Abolitionist. Every great reform is disreputable until it succeeds.

The Proclamation seemed to have freed the President too. When a man has made a New Year's gift of freedom to millions of men in bondage—emancipation was to take place wherever the Stars-and-Stripes flew on January 1, 1863—such a man must have a wonderful glow of reflected happiness. Always gentle, he grew gentler. Always with a keen eye for humorous absurdity, he grew still more fond of it.

Tom was sent for one day and hurried to the President's office. Lincoln was stretched out at full length, his body in a swivel-chair, his long legs on the sill of the open window. He was holding a seven-foot telescope to his eyes, its

other end resting upon his toes. He was looking at two steamboats puffing hard up the Potomac. What news did they bring? As the boy knocked, the President, without turning his head, called out: "Come in, Tommy."

Tom opened the door and as he did so John Hay pushed excitedly by him, a telegram in his hand, saying:

"Mr. President, what do you think Smith of Illinois has done? He is behaving very badly."

"Smith," answered Lincoln, "is a miracle of meanness, but I'm too busy to quarrel with him. Don't tell me what he's done and probably I'll never hear of it."

He knew how to disregard little men and their little deeds.

That night Tom sat up late. Nicolay and Hay had asked him to spend the evening, after the household had gone to bed, in their office. Crackers and cheese and a jug of milk were the refreshments and John Hay's talk was the delight of the little gathering. Midnight had just struck when the door opened quietly and the

President slipped into the room. Never had Tom seen him in such guise. The only thing he had on was a short nightshirt and carpet-slippers. He was smiling as he entered.

"Hear this, boys," he said. "It's from the 'Biglow Papers.' That fellow Lowell knows how to put things. Just hear this. He puts these Yankee words into Jeff Davis's mouth:

"'An' votin' we're prosp'rous a hundred times over
Wun't change bein' starved into livin' on clover.
. . . . . .
An' wut Spartans wuz lef' when the battle wuz done
Wuz them that wuz too unambitious to run.
. . . . . .
An' how, sence Fort Donelson, winnin' the day
Consists in triumphantly gettin' away!'

And here," continued the President, utterly unaware of the oddity of his garb, "and here is a good touch on the Proclamation. I wish all the 'cussed fools' in America could read it. Hear this:

"'An' why should we kick up a muss
About the Pres'dent's proclamation?
It ain't a-goin' to lib'rate us
Ef we don't like emancipation.
The right to be a cussed fool
Is safe from all devices human.
It's common (ez a gin'l rule)
To every critter born o' woman.'"

Lincoln strode out again, "seemingly utterly unconscious," says Hay's diary, "that he, with his short shirt hanging about his long legs and setting out behind like the tail feathers of an enormous ostrich, was infinitely funnier than anything in the book he was laughing at."

"That fellow Lowell" was James Russell Lowell, an American critic, poet, and essayist, later our Minister to England.

One day Tom had a welcome letter from his father, saying he was on his way home and would be in Washington almost as soon as his letter was. The letter was written from St. Petersburg and had upon its envelope Russian stamps. Tom had never seen a Russian stamp before. He showed the envelope as a curiosity to little Tad Lincoln and at that small boy's eager request gave it to him. Tom happened to lunch with the Lincoln family that day. Tad produced his new possession at the table, crying to his mother:

"See what Tommy has given me."

"Who wrote you from Russia?" asked Mrs. Lincoln.

"My father," the boy answered. "He sent me good news. He's coming home right away."

"Your father sent me good news, too," said Mr. Lincoln from the head of the table.

"What was that?" interjected the first lady of the land.

"You shall know soon, my dear." Then the beautiful smile came to the President's firm lips and overflowed into his deep-set eyes as he said to Tom: "The highest honor the old Romans could give to a fellow-citizen was to decree that he had 'deserved well of the Republic.' That can be said of your father now. He has deserved well of the Republic. Before long, the world will know what he has done. Until then," he turned as he spoke to his wife, "until then we'd better not talk about it."

This talk was in early June of 1863. By September the whole world, or at least all the governments of the world, did know what Mr. Strong had done after Lincoln sent him abroad.

The whole world saw the symbol of his work, without in many cases knowing what the symbol signified. That symbol was the famous visit of the Russian fleet to New York City in September of 1863.

The governing classes of both England and France were in favor of the South during our Civil War. The English and French Empires were jealous of the growth of the Republic and wished to see it torn asunder. France hoped to establish a Mexican Empire, a vassal of France, if the Confederacy won. England needed Southern cotton and could not get it unless our blockade of Southern ports was broken. The people of both France and England had little to say as to what their governments would do. Many distinguished Frenchmen took our side and the mass of Englishmen were also on our side, but the latter were helpless in the grip of their aristocratic rulers. They testified to their belief, however, splendidly. In the height of what was called "the cotton famine," when the Lancashire mills were closed for lack of the

fleecy staple and when the Lancashire mill-operatives were facing actual starvation, a tiny group of great Englishmen, John Bright and Thomas Bayley Potter among them, spoke throughout Lancashire on behalf of the Northern cause. There was to be a great meeting at Manchester, in the heart of the stricken district. The cost of hall, lights, advertising, etc., was considerable. Someone suggested charging an admission fee. It was objected that the unemployed poor could not afford to pay anything. Finally it was arranged to put baskets at the door, with placards saying that anyone who chose could give something towards the cost of the meeting. When it was over, the baskets were found to hold over four bushels of pennies and ha'pennies. The starving poor of Lancashire had given them, not out of their abundance, but out of their grinding want.

This was the widow's mite, many times multiplied.

The crafty Napoleon the Third, "Napoleon the Little," as the great French poet and nov-

elist, Victor Hugo, called him, asked England to have the English fleet join the French fleet in breaking our blockade and in making Slavery triumph. England hesitated before the proposed crime, but finally said it was inclined to follow the Napoleonic lead, if Russia would do likewise. Then the French Emperor wrote what is called a holographic letter, that is, a letter entirely in his own handwriting, to the then Czar of Russia, asking him to send part of his fleet on the unholy raid that was in contemplation.

Russia was then a despotism, with one despot. It was not only a European and an Asiatic Power, but an American Power as well, for it did not sell Alaska to the United States until 1867. Despotism does not like to see Liberty flourish anywhere, least of all near itself. Liberty is a contagious thing. Might not the American example infect Alaska, spread through Siberia, even creep to the steps of the throne at St. Petersburg? But this time, thanks to the work of our Minister to Russia and of our extra-

official representative there, the Hon. Thomas Strong, Despotism stood by Liberty. The Russian Czar wrote the French Emperor that the Russian fleet would not be a party to the proposed attack upon the Northern navy, but that on the contrary it was about to sail for New York in order that its commander might place it at the disposal of the President of the United States in case any Franco-English squadron appeared with hostile intent at our ocean-gates.

This was the beginning of the traditional friendship between America and Russia. It explains why New York and Washington went mad in those September days of 1863 in welcoming the Russian fleet and the Russian officers. It explains why Lincoln told Tom that his father had "deserved well of the Republic."

It was at about this time that John Hay once asked Tom:

"What do you think of the Tycoon by this time, my boy?"

"Tycoon" and "the Ancient" were names

his rather irreverent secretaries had given Lincoln. Nevertheless they both reverenced and loved him. Their nicknames for him were born of affection.

"Why, why," Tom began. He did not quite know how to put into fitting words all he felt about his chief. But John Hay, who was never much interested in the opinion on anything of anybody but himself, went on:

"I'll tell you what he is, Tom. He's a backwoods Jupiter. He sits here and wields both the machinery of government and the bolts of war. A backwoods Jupiter!"

CHAPTER IX

TOM GOES TO VICKSBURG—MORGAN'S RAID—GEN. BASIL W. DUKE CAPTURES TOM—GETTYSBURG—GEN. ROBERT E. LEE GIVES TOM HIS BREAKFAST—IN LIBBY PRISON—LINCOLN'S SPEECH AT GETTYSBURG.

LATE in June of 1863 Tom again left General Grant's headquarters. These were then in the outskirts of Vicksburg, Mississippi. The long siege of that town, held by a considerable Confederate force under General Pemberton, was nearing its end. Tom longed to be in at the death, but that could not be. He had been sent with dispatches to Grant and this time there had been no suggestion by the President that he might fight a bit if he felt like it. So he was now again on his way to Washington. He was a long time getting there, nearly a year; and this was the way of it.

July 2, 1863, Gen. John H. Morgan, a brilliant and daring Confederate cavalry commander, got his troops across the Cumberland River at Burkesville, in southern Kentucky, on flat-boats and canoes lashed together. None but he and his second in command knew whither the proposed raid was to lead. People about their starting-point thought Morgan was merely reconnoitering. An old farmer from Calfkills Creek went along uninvited, because he wished to buy some salt at a "salt-lick" a few miles north of Burkesville and within the Union lines. He expected to go and come back safely with Morgan's men. After he had been through a few marches and more fights and saw no chance of ever getting home, he plaintively said: "I swar ef I wouldn't give all the salt in Kaintucky to stand once more safe and sound on the banks of Calfkills Creek."

Tom Strong, second-lieutenant, U. S. A., had not reckoned upon John H. Morgan, general C. S. A., when he planned his journey eastward from Cairo. No one dreamed that Morgan

would dare do what he did do. The Confederate cavalry rode northward across Kentucky, with one or two skirmishes per day to keep it busy. It crossed the Ohio and fought for the South on Northern soil. It threatened Cincinnati. It threw southern Indiana and Ohio into a frenzy of fear. It did great damage, but damage such as the laws of civilized warfare permit. Morgan's gallant men were Americans. No woman or child was harmed; no man not under arms was killed. Military stores were seized or destroyed, food and supplies were taken, bridges were burned, railroads were torn up, and a clean sweep was made of all the horses to be found. The Confederate cavalry was in sad need of new horses. The Union officer who led the pursuit of Morgan said, in his official report: "His system of horse-stealing was perfect." But so far as war can be a Christian thing Morgan made it so.

Now the railroad which suffered most from the Confederate raid was the one upon which Tom was traveling eastward. The train he had

taken came to a sudden stop at a way-station in Ohio, where a red flag was furiously waved.

"Morgan's torn up the track just ahead," shouted the man who held the flag.

Nothing more could be learned there and then. Of course the raiders had cut the wires. By and by fugitives began to straggle in from the eastward, farmers who had fled from their farms driving their horses before them, villagers who feared the sack and ruin that really came to no one, women and children on foot, on horseback, in carts, in wagons, in buggies. Every fugitive had a new tale of terror to tell, but nobody really knew anything. Tom questioned each newcomer. Piecing together what they said, he concluded that Morgan had swept northward; that the track had been destroyed for but a mile or so, possibly less: and that the quickest way for him to get to Washington was to walk across the short gap and get a train or an engine on the other side. He could find no one who would go with him, even as a guide, but well-meant directions were showered upon

him. So were well-meant warnings, about ten warnings to one direction. The railroad, however, was his best guide-post. He started eastward, riding a horse he had bought from one of the fugitives. The big bay brute stood over sixteen hands high, but the price Tom paid for him was a good deal higher than the horse.

All went well at first. He soon reached the place where the Confederates had wrecked the railroad. Their work had been thorough. Every little bridge or trestle had been burned. Rails and ties had been torn up, the ties massed together and set on fire, the rails thrown upon the burning ties and twisted by the heat into sinuous snakes of iron. Occasionally a hot rail had been twisted about a tree until it became a mere set of loops, never to serve again the purpose for which it had been made. The telegraph poles had been chopped down and the wires were tangled into a broken and useless web. In some places the rails had entirely disappeared. Doubtless these had been thrown into the little streams which the burned bridges had

spanned. Altogether the road-bed looked as if some highly intelligent hurricane and earthquake had co-operated in its destruction. It would be many a day before a train could again run upon it. Morgan's system of wrecking a railroad was almost as perfect as his system of horse-stealing.

A country-road wandered along beside where the railroad had been, so Tom's progress was easy. Its bridges, too, had gone up in smoke, but the little streams were shallow and could be forded without difficulty, for June had been rainless and hot that year. The few houses the boy passed were shut-up and deserted. The fear of Morgan had swept the countryside bare of man, woman, and child. The solitude, the unnatural solitude of a region normally full of human life, told on Tom's nerves. He longed to see a human being. He had now left the gap in the railroad well behind, but he was still in an Eden without an Adam or an Eve. So, as dusk came, he rejoiced to see the gleam of a candle in a farmhouse not far ahead. He was so

sure Morgan's whole command was by this time far to the northward that he galloped gayly up to the house—and, perforce, presented to the Confederacy one of the best horses seized in the entire raid.

The gleam had come from a back window. The whole front of the house was closed, but that is common in rustic places and Tom was sure he would find the family in the kitchen, with both food and news to give him. Instead he found just outside the kitchen, as he and the big bay turned the corner, a group of dismounted cavalrymen in Confederate gray. A mounted officer was beside them. Two mounted men, one carrying a guidon, was nearby. Tom pulled hard on his right rein, to turn and run, and bent close to his saddle to escape the bullets he expected. But one of the men was already clutching the left rein. The horse reared and plunged and kicked. The rider, to his infinite disgust, was hurled from the saddle and landed on his hands and knees before the group. It was rather an abject position

in which to be captured. The Southerners roared with good-humored laughter as they picked him up. Even the officer smiled at the boy's plight.

Before the men, on a table outside the kitchen door, lay a half-dozen appetizing apple pies, evidently of that day's baking. The farmer's wife, before she fled, had put them there with the hope that they might propitiate the raiders, if they came, and so might save the house from destruction. She did not know that Morgan's men did not make war that way. Those of them who had come there suspected a trap in this open offer of the pies.

"They mout be pizened," one trooper suggested.

At that moment, when they were hesitating between hunger and fear, Tom butted in upon them and was seized.

"Let the Yankee sample the pies," shouted a second soldier when the little scurry of the capture was over. This met instant approval and Tom, now upon his feet, was being pushed for-

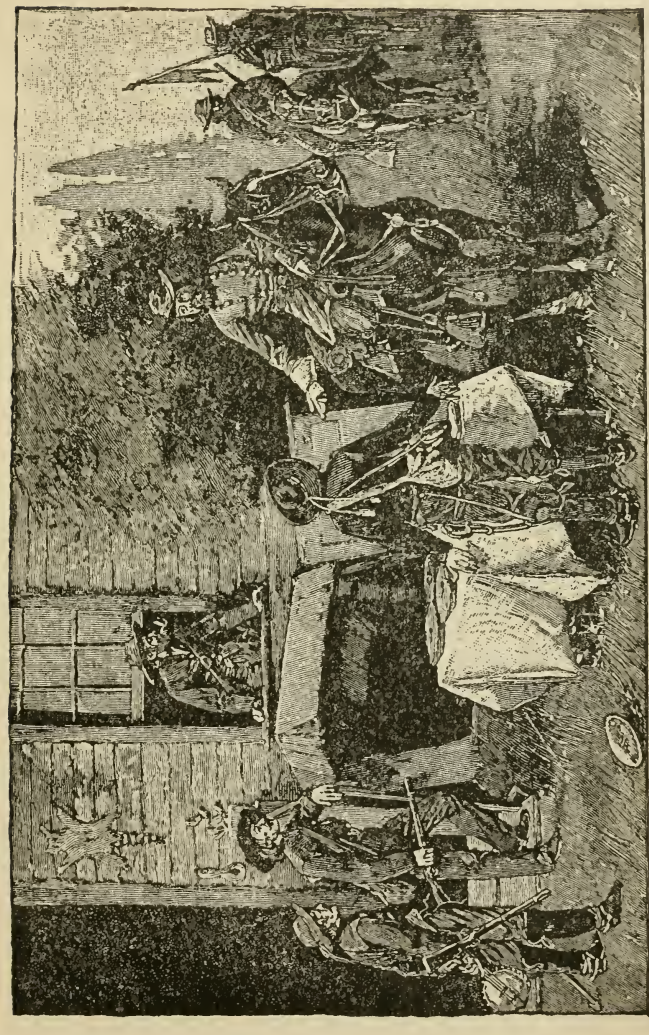
ward to the table when the officer spoke, with a smiling dignity that showed he was the friend as well as the commander of his rude soldiery.

"I'll do the sampling," he said. "Give me a pie."

He bit with strong white teeth through the savory morsel and detected no foreign taint. The pies vanished forthwith, half of one of them down Tom's hungry throat. Then the officer spoke to him.

"Son," he said, "I suppose you borrowed that uniform somewhere, didn't you? You're too young to wear it by right. Who are you?"

He was a man of medium height, spare but splendidly built, with his face bronzed by long campaigning in the open air, regular features, piercing black eyes that twinkled, but could shoot fire, waving black hair above a beautiful brow, dazzling white teeth—altogether a vivid man. His mustache and imperial were black. He was as handsome as Abraham Lincoln was plain, yet there was between the two, the one the son of a Southern aristocrat, the other the



From "Famous Adventures of the Civil War." The Century Co.

GENERAL DUKE SAMPLES THE PIES

son of a Southern poor white, an elusive resemblance. It may have been the innate nobleness and kindliness of both men. It may have been the Kentucky blood which was their common portion. At any rate, the resemblance was there.

Tom took one glance at the chief of his captors and then saluted with real respect as he replied:

"I am Thomas Strong, sir, second-lieutenant, U. S. A."

"Upon my word, sir, I am sorry to hear it. We don't make war on boys. If you had been, as I thought, just masquerading as a soldier, I would have turned you loose at once. Now I must take you with us."

Ten minutes afterwards, the little group with Tom, disarmed but unbound, in the middle of it, was galloping northeastward. A few yards ahead of it the officer rode with a free bridle rein, chatting with an aide beside him. He rode like a centaur. Tom thought him one of the finest soldiers he had ever seen. And so he was.

He was Gen. Basil W. Duke, brother-in-law, second in command, and historian of General Morgan. He was a soldier and a gentleman, if ever God made one.

A fortnight later, a fortnight of almost constant fighting, much of it with home-guards and militia who feared Morgan too much to fight him hard, but part of it with seasoned soldiers who fought as good Americans should, Morgan crossed the Ohio again into the comparative safety of West Virginia. He took across with him his few prisoners, including Tom. Then, finding that the mass of his brigade had been cut off from crossing, the Confederate general detached a dozen men to take the prisoners south while he himself with most of the troopers with him recrossed to where danger beckoned. On July 26, 1862, at Salineville, Ohio, not far from Pittsburg, trapped, surrounded, and outnumbered, he surrendered with the 364 men who were all that were left of his gallant band. Our government made the mistake of treating him and his officers not as captured soldiers but

as arrested bandits. They were sent to the Ohio State Penitentiary, whence Morgan made a daring escape not long afterwards. He made his way to freedom on Southern soil. Meanwhile, Tom had been taken to captivity on that same soil. He was in Libby Prison, at the Confederate Capital, Richmond, Virginia.

His journey thither had been long and hard and uneventful, except for the gradual loss of the few things he had with him. His pistol and his money had been taken when he was first captured. Now, as he was turned over to one Confederate command after another, bit by bit his belongings disappeared. His boots went early in the journey. His cap was plucked from his head. His uniform was eagerly seized by a Confederate spy, who meant to use it in getting inside the Union lines. When he was finally turned over to the Provost Marshal of the chief Confederate army, commanded by Gen. Robert E. Lee, he was bareheaded and barefoot and had nothing to wear except an old Confederate gray shirt and the ragged remains of what had

once been a pair of Confederate gray trousers, held about his waist by a string. He was hungry and tired and unbelievably dirty. The one good meal he had had on his long march had been given him at Frederick, Maryland, by a delightful old lady whom Tom always believed to be Barbara Frietchie.

It was August now. On July 4, Grant had taken Vicksburg and Meade had defeated Lee at Gettysburg. The doom of the Confederacy had begun to dawn. None the less Robert E. Lee's tattered legions, forced back from the great offensive in Pennsylvania to the stubborn defense of Richmond, trusted, worshiped, and loved their great general.

Meade, the Union commander, by excess of caution, had let Lee escape after Gettysburg. He did not attack the retreating foe. Lincoln was deeply grieved.

"We had them within our grasp," he said, throwing out his long arms. "We had only to stretch forth our hands and they were ours.

And nothing I could say or do could make our army move."

Four days afterwards, General Wadsworth of New York, a gallant fighter, one of the corps commanders who had tried to spur the too-prudent Meade into attacking, came to the White House.

"Why did Lee escape?" Lincoln eagerly asked him.

"Because nobody stopped him."

And that was the truth of it. If Lee had been stopped, the war would have ended nearly two years before it did end. It is a wonderful proof of Lincoln's wonderful sense of justice that though he repeated: "Our army held the war in the hollow of their hand and they would not close it," he added at once: "Still, I am very, very grateful to Meade for the great service he did at Gettysburg."

Lee was a son of "Light-Horse Harry" Lee, the daring cavalry commander of the Revolution and the author of the immortal phrase about

Washington: "First in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen." Robert E. Lee had had an honorable career at West Point and in the war with Mexico and was Lieutenant-Colonel of Engineers in the United States army when the war between the States began. He loved his country and her flag, but he had been bred in the belief that his loyalty was due first to Virginia rather than to the Union. When the Old Dominion, after first refusing to secede, finally did so, Lieut.-Col. Lee, U. S. A., became General Lee, C. S. A. Great efforts were made to keep him on the Union side. It is said he was offered the chief command of our army. Sadly he did his duty as he saw it. He put aside the offers made him, resigned his commission, and left Arlington for Richmond.

Arlington, now a vast cemetery of Union soldiers, crowns a hill on the Virginia side of the Potomac. The city of Washington lies at its feet. The valley of the Potomac spreads before it. From the portico of the old-fashioned house,

a portico upheld by many columns, one can look towards Mt. Vernon, not many miles away, but hid from sight by clustering hills. The house was built in 1802 by George Washington Parke Custis, son of Washington's stepson, who was his aide at Yorktown in 1783, and grandson of Martha Washington. Parke Custis, who died in 1858, directed in his will that his slaves should be freed in five years. Lee, his son-in-law and executor, scrupulously freed them in 1863 and gave them passes through the Confederate lines. He had already given freedom to his own slaves. Long before the war, he wrote from Fort Brown, Texas, to his wife: "In this enlightened age there are few, I believe, but will acknowledge that slavery as an institution, is a moral and political evil in any country. . . . I think it is a greater evil to the white than the black race."

Robert E. Lee was one of the greatest four Virginians. He ranks with George Washington, George Mason, and Thomas Jefferson. No praise could be greater. When "the Lost

ARLINGTON

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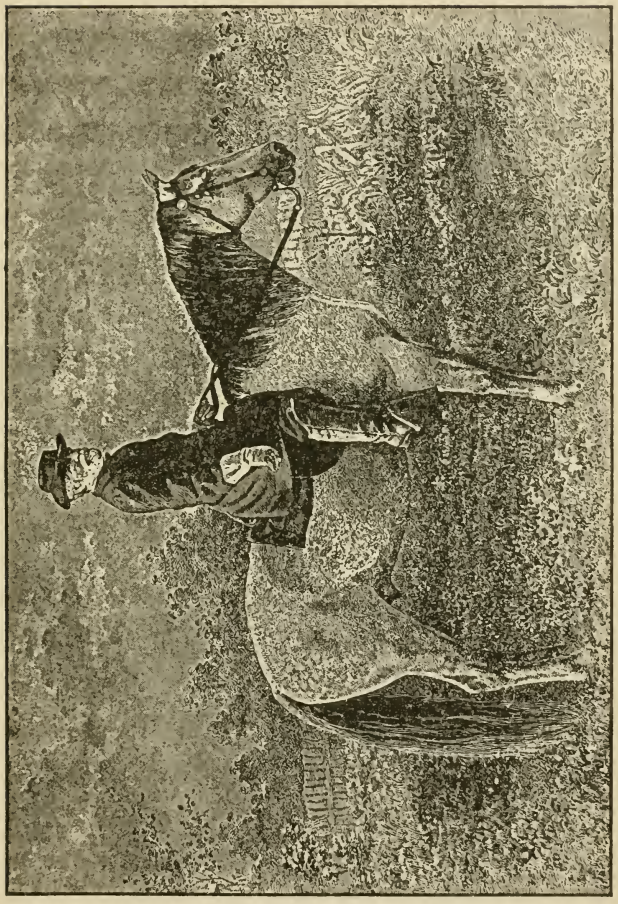
Cause," as the Southerners fondly call their great fight for what they believed to be right, reeled down to decisive defeat, the general whom they had worshiped in war proved himself a great patriot in peace. His last years were passed as President of Washington and Lee University in Virginia. Long before his death, his name was honored by every fair-minded man on the Northern as well as the Southern side of Mason and Dixon's line. One of the noblest eulogies of him was voiced upon the centennial of his birth, January 9, 1907, at Washington and Lee University, by Charles Francis Adams. The best blood of Massachusetts honored the best blood of Virginia. Our country was then again one country and all of it was free.

Tom Strong was standing with a group of other prisoners, all Northern officers, under guard, beside the Provost Marshal's tent at Lee's headquarters. These were upon a little knoll, from which the eye ranged over the long

lines of rotten tents, huts, and heaps of brush that gave such shelter as they could to the ragged, hungry, and undaunted legions of the Confederacy. It was early in the morning. Scanty breakfasts were cooking over a thousand fires. From the cook-tent at headquarters, there came an odor of bubbling coffee that made the prisoners' hunger the harder to bear. The whole camp was strangely silent.

Then, in the distance, there was a storm of cheering. It gained in sound and shrillness. The soldiers poured out of their tents by the thousand. Those who had hats waved them; those who had not waved their arms; and every throat joined in the famous "rebel yell." Through the shouting thousands rode a half-dozen superbly mounted horsemen, at their head a gallant figure, with close-cropped white beard, whiskers, and mustache, seated upon a superb iron-gray horse, sixteen hands high, the famous Traveler.

It was Robert E. Lee, the one hope of the Confederacy. Even his iron self-control almost



GEN. ROBERT E. LEE ON TRAVELER

broke, as he saw the passionate joy with which he was hailed by the survivors of the gallant gray army he had launched in vain against the bayonet-crowned hills of Gettysburg. A flush almost as red as that of youth crept across his pale cheeks and a mist crept into his eyes. His charger bore him proudly up the grassy knoll where the Union prisoners were huddled together. As his glance swept over them, he noted with surprise the youthfulness of the boy who stood in the front line. Many a boy as young as Tom or even younger was in the ranks Lee led. Many an old man bent under the weight of his gun in those ranks. The Confederacy, by this time almost bled white, was said to have "robbed the cradle and the grave" to keep its armies at fighting strength. The North, with many more millions of people, had not been driven to do this. Tom was one of the few boys in the armies of the Union.

"Who is this?" asked Lee, as he checked Traveler before the group.

"Thomas Strong, sir," answered the boy.

"Your rank?"

"Second-lieutenant, sir."

"Where were you captured?"

"In Ohio, sir, by General Morgan."

Tom was faint with hunger as he was put through this little catechism. As he made the last answer, he reeled against the next prisoner, Col. Thomas E. Rose, of Indiana, who caught and held him. Lee misunderstood the movement. His lip curled with disgust as he said:

"Are you—a boy—drunk?"

Tom was too far gone to answer, but Rose and a half-dozen others answered for him.

"Not drunk, but hungry, General.

"I beg your pardon," the courteous Virginian replied, "but at least you shall be hungry no longer. My staff and I will postpone our breakfast until you have eaten. Pompey!" An old negro came out of the cook-tent. He had been one of George Washington Parke Custis's slaves. When freed, he had refused to leave "Marse Robert," whose cook he had become. He wore the remains of a Confederate uniform.

"Pompey, give these gentlemen our breakfast. We will wait."

"But—but—Marse Robert, I'se dun got real coffee dis mornin'."

"Our involuntary guests," said Lee with a gentle smile as he turned to the prisoners, "will, I hope, enjoy the real coffee."

And enjoy it they did. It and the cornbread and bacon that came with it were nectar and ambrosia to the hungry prisoners. The only fleck upon the feast was when one of them, in his hurry to be served, spoke rudely to old Pompey. The negro turned away without a word, but his feelings were deeply hurt. When the Union officer hurled after him a word of foul abuse, Pompey turned back, laid his hand upon his ragged uniform, and said:

"I doesn't objeck to de pussonal cussin', sah, but you must 'speck de unicorn."

After that the "unicorn" and the fine old negro who wore it were both amply respected. When everything in sight had been eaten, the prisoners were ordered to fall in line. Their

guards stood in front of the little column, beside it, behind it.

"Forward, march!"

They marched southward for a few miles, tramped through the swarming, somber streets of Richmond, and reached Libby Prison. Its doors closed behind them with a clang. Captivity in the open had been hard enough to bear. This new kind of captivity, within doors, with barred windows, was to be harder yet. Tom was to spend six weary months in Libby Prison.

It was while he was there that Abraham Lincoln made his wonderful Gettysburg speech.

The battlefield of Gettysburg was made sacred by the men who died there for Freedom's sake and also by the men who died there for the sake of what they honestly thought were the rights of the Slave States. Congress made the battlefield a Soldiers' Cemetery. It was to be dedicated to its great memories on November 19, 1863. The morning before a special train left Washington for Gettysburg. It carried

President Lincoln, Secretary of State Seward, two other members of the Cabinet, the two private secretaries, Nicolay and Hay, the distinguished Pennsylvanian, Wayne MacVeagh, later U. S. Attorney-General and later still our Minister to Italy, and others of lesser note. Among those latter was the Hon. Thomas Strong, who had been made one of the party by Lincoln's kind thoughtfulness. It was he who afterwards told his son the story of Lincoln's Gettysburg speech, scarcely regarded at the moment, but long since recognized as one of the masterpieces of English literature.

The little town of Gettysburg was in a ferment that November night, when the President's train arrived. It was full of people and bands and whisky. Crowds strolled through the streets, serenading statesmen and calling for speeches with an American crowd's insatiable appetite for talky-talk. "MacVeagh," says Hay, "made a most beautiful and touching speech of five minutes," but another Pennsylvanian made a most disgusting and drunken

speech of many minutes. Lincoln and most of his party of course had no share in all this brawling merriment. He and Seward had talked briefly to shouting thousands early in the evening.

On the way up from Washington, the President had sat in a sad abstraction. He took little part in the talk that buzzed about him. Once, when MacVeagh was vehemently declaiming about the way the Southern magnates were misleading the Southern masses, Lincoln said with a weary smile one of those sayings of his which will never be forgotten. "You can fool part of the people all the time; you can fool all the people part of the time; but you can't fool all the people all the time." Then he became silent again. He did not know what he was to say on the morrow. The chief oration was to be by Edward Everett of Massachusetts, a trained orator, fluent and finished in polished phrase. He had been Governor of Massachusetts, Minister to England, Secretary of State, United States Senator. He was handsome, distin-

guished, graceful. The ungainly President felt that he and his words would be but a foil to Everett and his sonorous sentences, sentences that were sure to come rolling in like "the surge and thunder of the Odyssey." Everett had graduated from Harvard, Lincoln from a log-cabin. Both must face on the morrow the same audience.

The President searched his pockets and found the stub of a pencil. From the aisle of the car, he picked up a piece of brown wrapping paper, thrown there by Seward, who had just opened a package of books in the opposite seat. He penciled a few words, bent his head upon his great knotted hand in thought, then penciled a few more. Then he struck out some words and added others, read his completed task and did not find it good. He shook his head, stuffed the brown wrapping paper into his pocket, and took up again his interrupted talk with MacVeagh.

At eleven the next morning, from an open-air platform on the battlefield, Everett held the vast audience through two hours of fervent speech,

fervent with patriotism, fervent also with bitterness against the men he called "the Southern rebels." His speech was literature and his voice was music. As the thunder of his peroration ended a thunderstorm of applause began. When it, too, died away, there shambled to the front of the platform an ungainly, badly dressed man, contrasting sharply and in every way disadvantageously with Everett of the silver tongue. This man's tongue betrayed him too. He tried to pitch his voice to reach all that vast audience and his first words came in a squeaking falsetto. A titter ran through the crowd. Lincoln stopped speaking. There were a few seconds of painful silence. Then he came to his own. With a voice enriched by a passionate sincerity, he began again and finished his Gettysburg speech. Here it is:

"Fourscore and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth on this Continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether

that nation, or any nation, so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of it as a final resting-place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But in a larger sense we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow, this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or to detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they here gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation,

under God, shall have a new birth of freedom; and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth."

The President ceased to speak. There was no thunderstorm of applause such as had followed Everett's studied sentences and polished periods. There was no applause at all. One long stir of emotion throbbed through the silent throng, but did not break the silence. Then the multitude dispersed, talking of what Everett had said, thinking of what Lincoln had said. Most of the notables on the platform thought the President's speech a failure. Time has shown that it was one of the greatest things even he ever did.

Mary Raymond Shipman Andrews has written in her short story "The Perfect Tribute" the history of the Gettysburg speech. The boy who would know what manner of man our Abraham Lincoln was should read "The Perfect Tribute." One of the characters in the story, a dying Confederate officer, says to Lincoln without knowing to whom he was speak-

ing: "The speech so went home to the hearts of all those thousands of people that when it ended it was as if the whole audience held its breath—there was not a hand lifted to applaud. One might as well applaud the Lord's prayer—it would be sacrilege. And they all felt it—down to the lowest. There was a long minute of reverent silence, no sound from all that great throng—it seems to me, an enemy, that it was the most perfect tribute that has ever been paid by any people to any orator."

The Gettysburg speech was not for the moment. It is for all time.

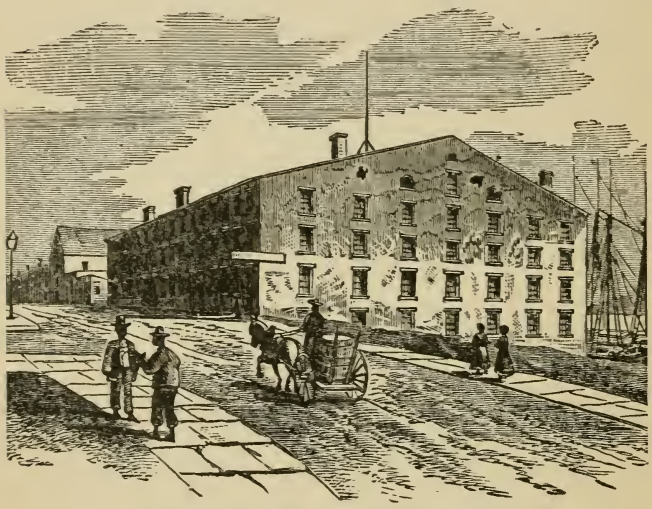
CHAPTER X

TOM IS HUNGRY—HE LEARNS TO "SPOON" BY SQUADS—THE BULLET AT THE WINDOW—WORKING ON THE TUNNEL—"RAT HELL"—THE RISK OF THE ROLL-CALL—WHAT HAPPENED TO JAKE JOHNSON, CONFEDERATE SPY—TOM IN LIBBY PRISON—HANS ROLF ATTENDS HIM—HANS REFUSES TO ESCAPE—THE FLIGHT THROUGH THE TUNNEL—FREE, BUT HOW TO STAY SO?

WHEN the war between the States began, Libby & Son were a thriving firm of merchants in Richmond. They owned a big warehouse, which fronted on Carey Street and extended back over land that sloped down to another street, which occupied all the space between the southern wall of the warehouse and the canal that here bordered the James River. The building was full before the war of that rich Virginia tobacco which Thackeray praises in

"The Virginians" and which the worn-out lands of the Old Dominion can no longer produce.

The prisoners in Libby had painfully little to eat. The whole South was hungry. When Con-



LIBBY PRISON AFTER THE WAR

federate soldiers were starving, Confederate prisoners could not expect to fatten. Nor was this the only evil thing. The prison was indescribably unclean. The cellar and the lower floor, upon which no prisoners were allowed except in the dining-room in the middle of the

floor and the hospital, swarmed with huge rats which climbed upstairs at night and nipped mouthfuls of human flesh when they could. There was no furniture. The prisoners slept on the floor, so crowded together that they had to lie spoon fashion in order to lie down at all. They had divided themselves into squads and had chosen commanders. Tom found himself assigned to Squad Number Four. The first night, when he had at last sunk into uncomfortable sleep upon the hard floor, he was awakened by the sharp command of the captain of his group:

"Attention, Squad No. Four! Prepare to spoon! One, two, spoon!"

The squad flopped over, from one weary bruised side to another. It seemed to the worn-out boy that he had just "spooned," when again he waked to hear the queer command and again he flopped. This was a sample of many nights.

On the following morning Tom had one of the narrow escapes of his life. He was leaning against one of the barred windows, looking at

the broad valley of the James, when he was suddenly seized violently by the arm and jerked to one side. His arm ached with the vice-like grip that had been laid upon it and his knees, sticking through his torn trousers, had been barked against the floor, as he was dragged back, but he turned to the man who had laid hold of him, not with anger, but with thankfulness. For, at the second he had been seized a bullet had whizzed through the window just where his head had been. If he had not been jerked away, the Chronicles of Tom Strong would have ended then and there.

If Tom was not angry, the man was. He glared at him.

"You little fool, don't you know better than that?"

When the boy heard himself called a fool, he did become angry, but after all this big person had saved his life, even if he did call him names. So he swallowed his wrath—which is an excellent thing to do with wrath—and answered quite meekly:

"No, sir, I don't know better. Can't we look out of the windows?"

"Hasn't anybody told you that?"

"No, sir."

"Then I shouldn't have called you a fool." Tom smiled and nodded in acceptance of the implied apology. "The sentries outside have orders to fire whenever they see anybody at a window. Last week two men were killed that way. I thought you were a goner, sure, when I saw you looking out. Sorry if I hurt you, but it's better to be hurt than to be killed. Shake."

The boy wrung the big man's hand and thanked him for his timely aid. They strolled together up and down the big room now deserted by most of its occupants, who had begun below their patient wait for dinner. The man was Colonel Rose. He found Tom to his liking. And he needed an intelligent boy in his business. Just then Colonel Rose's business was to escape. This seemed hopeless, but the Colonel did not think so. Yet it had been often tried and had always failed. When several hundred

intelligent Americans are shut up, through no fault of their own, in a most unpleasant prison, with nothing to do, they are quite certain to find something to do by planning an escape and by trying to make the plan a reality. One trouble about the former plans at Libby had been that the whole mass of prisoners had known about them. There must always be leaders in such an enterprise, but hitherto the leaders had taken the crowd into their confidence. Now there were Confederate spies in the crowd, sham prisoners. The former plots had always been found out. Once or twice they had been allowed to ripen and the first fugitives had found their first free breath their last, for they had stumbled into a trap and had been instantly shot down upon the threshold of freedom. More often the ringleaders had disappeared, spirited away without warning and probably shot, while their scared followers had been left to despair. Rose had learned the history of all the past attempts. He planned along new lines. He decided upon absolute secrecy, except for the men

who were actually to do the work. This work involved a good deal of burrowing into holes that must be particularly narrow at first and never very big. A strong, lithe boy could get into a hole where a stout man could not go. Once in, he could enlarge it so that many men could follow. Colonel Rose wanted a human mole. He had picked Tom Strong for the job. Now, in whispered sentences, he told the boy of the plan and asked his aid. Tom's shining eyes threatened to tell how important the talk was.

"Act as though you were uninterested, my boy," Colonel Rose warned him. "Keep your eyelids down. Yawn occasionally."

So Tom tried to look dull, which was not at all his natural appearance. He studied the floor as if he expected to find diamonds upon it. He yawned so prodigiously as to attract the attention he was trying to escape. An amateur actor is apt to overact his part. And all the time he was listening with a passionate interest to Colonel Rose's story of the way to freedom.

Of course he was glad to try to help make the hope a fact.

That night the work began. The kitchen dining-hall was deserted from 10 P.M. to 4 A.M., so it was selected as the field of operation. Below the kitchen was the carpenter-shop. No opening could be made into that without instant detection. On the same floor with the kitchen and just east of it was the hospital. That room must be avoided too. Below the hospital was an unused cellar, half full of rotting straw and all full of squealing rats. It was called "Rat Hell." Outside of it was a small sewer that led to a larger one which passed under the canal and emptied its contents into the James River. These sewers were to be the highway to freedom. The first step must be to get from the kitchen to Rat Hell. To do this it was necessary to dig through a solid stone wall a reversed "S," like this:

The upper end of the secret passage was to open into the kitchen fireplace, the lower into

Rat Hell. There were fourteen men in the secret, besides Tom. Between them, they had just one tool, an old knife. One of them owned a bit of burlap, used sometimes as a mattress and sometimes as a bed-quilt. It had a new use now. It was spread upon the kitchen hearth in the midnight darkness and a pile of soot was pulled down upon it. Then the mortar between a dozen bricks at the back of the fireplace was cut out with the knife and the bricks pried out of place. This was done by Major A. G. Hamilton, Colonel Rose's chief assistant. He carefully replaced the bricks and flung handfuls of soot over them. He and Rose crept upstairs, carrying the sooty bit of burlap with them, and slept through what was left of the night. The next day was an anxious time for them. When they went down to the kitchen, where a couple of hundred men were gathered, it seemed to them that the marks of their toil by night were too plain not to be seen by some of them. Their nervousness made them poor judges. Nobody saw what had been done. That night, as soon

as the last straggler left, Rose and Hamilton again removed the bricks and attacked the stubborn stone behind the fireplace. Fortunately the stones were not large. Bit by bit they were pried out of the loosened mortar.

Now came Tom's chance to serve the good cause. He was a proud boy, a few nights later, when he was permitted to go down to the kitchen with the Colonel and the Major, in order that he might creep into the hole they had made and enlarge it. His heels wiggled in the air. He laid upon his stomach in the upper part of the reversed "S" and plied the old knife as vigorously as it could be plied without making a tell-tale noise. When he had widened the passage, one of the men took his place in it and drove it downward. One night Colonel Rose in his eagerness got into the opening before the lower part of it had been sufficiently enlarged and stuck there. It was only by a terrible effort that Hamilton and Tom finally dragged him out, bruised, bleeding and gasping for breath. Finally, after many nights,

Rat Hell was reached. A bit of rope, stolen from about a box of food sent a prisoner, had been made into a rope ladder. It was hung from the edge of the hole. The three crept cautiously down to Rat Hell. This haven did not seem much like heaven. With squeals of wrath, the rats attacked the intruders and the intruders fled up their ladder. They were no match for a myriad rats. Moreover they feared lest the noise would bring into the basement the sentry whose steps they could hear on the sidewalk outside. So they fled, taking their rope-ladder with them, and again, as ever, they replaced the bricks and painted them with the friendly soot.

The next night, armed this time with sticks of wood, they fought it out with the rats and made them understand their masters had come to stay. Fortunately the fight was short. It was noisy and the sentry came. But when he opened the door from the street and looked into the darkness of the basement, the Union officers were safely hid under the straw and only a few

of the defeated rats still squealed. At last the tunnel to the sewer could be begun. Colonel

FIGHTING THE RATS
From "Famous Adventures of the Civil War."
The Century Co.

Rose had long since decided, by forbidden, stealthy glances from an upper window, just where it was to be. The measurement made

above was now made below, the straw against the eastern wall was rolled aside and the old knife, or what was left of it after its battle with brick and stone, was put to the easier task of digging dirt.

Soon a new difficulty had to be met. Before the tunnel was five feet long, the air in it became so foul that candles went out in it. So would the lives of the diggers have gone out if they had stayed in it long. Five of the fifteen now went down each night, so that everybody had two nights' rest out of three. But the progress made was pitifully slow. Man after man was hauled by his heels out of the poisonous pit, almost at his last gasp. Once, when Hamilton had been brought out and was being fanned back to life by Colonel Rose and Tom, the boy whispered:

"Why not fan air into the tunnel?"

Nobody had thought of that obvious plan. Like most great inventions it was simple—when seen. Thereafter one or two men always sat at the end of the tunnel fanning air into it with

their hats. But even so, many a candle went out and many a digger was pulled out, black in the face and almost dead.

The tunnel sloped downwards, of course, to reach the sewer. It sloped too far down. It got below the water-level of the canal. Hamilton was caught in it by the rush of water and almost drowned. So much work had to be done over again. Then came a crushing blow. When the small sewer was finally reached, it proved to be too small for a man to pass through it. But it had a wooden lining, which was bit by bit taken off. When this had been done to within a few feet of the main sewer, two men were detailed to cut their way through. The next night was set as the time for the escape. None of the thirteen slept while the two were cutting away the final obstacle. The thirteen did not sleep the next night either, for it was 36 hours before the two came back with their heartbreaking news. They had found the last few feet of the sewer-lining made of seasoned oak, three inches thick and hard as stone. The

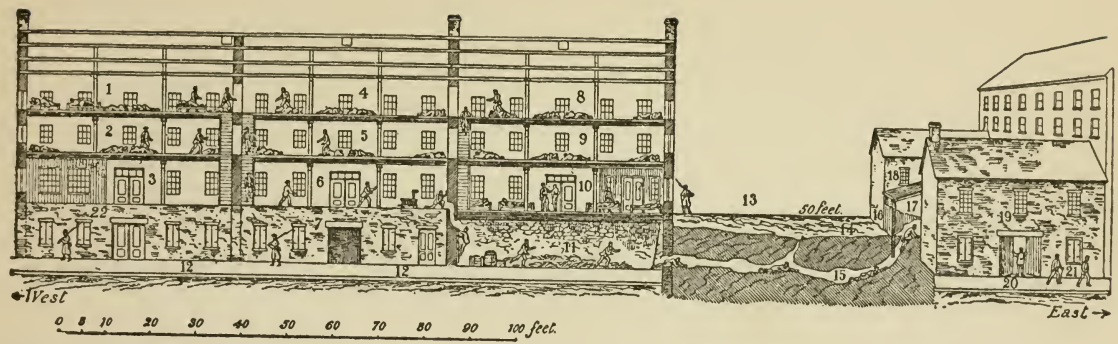
poor old knife that had served them so long and so well, could not even scratch the toughened oak. Thirty-nine nights of grinding toil had ended in failure.

Meanwhile the thirteen had had to face a new problem. There were two roll-calls every day, at 9 A.M. and 4 P.M. How were the two absent men to answer? At roll-call everybody stood in one long line and everybody was counted. If the count were two short, there would be swift search for the missing. And the beginning of the tunnel was hidden only by a few bundles of straw. This was before they knew the tunnel was useless, but had they known it they would have been scarcely less anxious, for its discovery would have made all future attempts to escape more dangerous and more doubtful. However, the roll-call problem was safely solved. The thirteen crowded into the upper end of the line and two of them, as soon as they had answered to their own names, dropped back, crouched down, crept behind the backs of many men to the other end of the line, slipped into

place, and there answered for the missing men, without detection. In the afternoon, they came very near being caught. Some of the other prisoners thought this was being done just for fun, to confuse the Confederate clerk who called the roll, and thought they would take a hand in the fun too. There was so much dodging and double answering that "Little Ross," the good-humored little clerk, lost his temper and ordered the captives to stand in squads of ten to be counted. By this time he had called the roll half a dozen times, with results varying from minus one to plus fifteen. When he gave his order, an order obedience to which would have certainly told the tale of two absentees, he went on to explain why he gave it.

"Now, gentlemen, there's one thing sho'; there's eight or ten of you-uns yere that ain't yere."

This remarkable statement brought a shout of laughter from the Confederate guards. The prisoners joined in it. "Little Ross" himself caught the contagion and also began to laugh.



From "Famous Adventures of the Civil War." The Century Co.

SECTIONAL VIEW OF LIBBY PRISON AND THE TUNNEL

1. Streight's room; 2. Milroy's room; 3. Commandant's office; 4. Chickamauga room (upper); 5. Chickamauga room (lower); 6. Dining-room; 7. Carpenter's shop (middle cellar); 8. Gettysburg room (upper); 9. Gettysburg room (lower); 10. Hospital room; 11. East or "Rat Hell" cellar; 12. South side Canal street, ten feet lower than Carey street; 13. North side Carey street, ground sloping toward Canal; 14. Open lot; 15. Tunnel; 16. Fence; 17. Shed; 18. Kerr's warehouse; 19. Office James River Towing Co.; 20. Gate; 21. Prisoners escaping; 22. West cellar.

The dreaded order was laughed out of court and forgotten.

The two men crept upstairs early the next morning. The first night daylight had caught them at work, so they had not dared to return, but had stayed and had worked through the 36 hours. They brought back the handle of the knife, with a mere stump of a blade, and the depressing news of failure. But men who are fit for freedom do not cease to strive for it. If one road to it is blocked, they seek another. That very day, when the fifteen had gathered together and the two had told their tale, a pallor of despair crept over some of the faces, but it was dispelled by the flush of hope when Colonel Rose said: "If we can't go south, we'll go east; we must tunnel to the yard beyond the vacant lot. We'll begin tonight."

"But," objected one doubting Thomas, "from the yard we'd have to come out on the street. There's a gas-lamp there—and a sentry."

"We can put out the lamp and if need be the sentry," Colonel Rose answered, "when we get

to them. The thing now is to get there. We have fifty-three feet of tunnel to dig, if my figures are correct. That's a job of a good many nights. This night will see the job begun."

It was begun with a broad chisel kind Fate had put in their way and with a big wooden spittoon, tied to a rope. This, when filled with earth, was pulled out, emptied, and returned for a fresh load. A fortnight afterwards the officer who was digging that night made a mistake in levels and came too near the surface, which broke above him. Dismayed, he backed out and reported the blunder. The hole was in plain sight. Discovery was certain if it were not hidden. The story was but half told when Colonel Rose began stripping off his blouse.

"Here, Tom, take this. It's as dirty as the dirt and won't show. Stuff it into the hole so it will lie flat on the surface. Quick!"

Tom wriggled along the tunnel to the hole. There he smeared some more dirt on the dirty blouse, put it into the hole with cunning care, and wriggled back. That morning at sunrise,

when they peeked down from their prison windows into the eastern lot, even their straining eyes could scarcely see the tiny bit of blouse that showed. No casual glance would detect it. Of that they were sure.

Every few days new prisoners were thrust into Libby. Whenever this happened it was the custom that on the first evening they should tell whatever news they could of the outside world and of their own capture to the whole prison community. One morning the keeper of Libby receipted for another captured Yankee and soon Captain Jacob Johnson appeared in the grimy upper rooms. He responded very cordially, rather too cordially, to the greetings he received. It soon became understood that he was only a guerilla captain from Tennessee. Now neither side was overproud of the guerillas who infested the borderland, who sometimes called themselves Unionists and sometimes Confederates, and who did more stealing than fighting. So a rather cold shoulder was turned to

the new captive, though the community's judgment upon him was deferred until after he should have been heard that evening. He seemed to try to warm the cold shoulder by a certain greasy sidling to and fro and by attempts at too familiar conversation. He began to talk to Colonel Rose, who soon shook him off, and to sundry other persons, among whom was Tom. The boy was not mature enough in the ways of the world to get rid of him. Johnson spent some hours with him and bored him to distraction. There was a mean uneasiness about him that repelled Tom. His face, an undeniably Yankee face, awoke some unpleasant memory, from time to time, but the boy could not place him and finally decided that this was merely a fancy, not a fact. None the less the man himself was an unpleasant fact. He peered about and sidled about in a way that might be due only to Yankee curiosity, but Tom didn't like it. He disliked Johnson more and more as the newcomer kept returning to him and growing more confidential. His talk was on various

natural enough themes, but it kept veering back to the chances of escape.

"I don't mean to stay in this hole long," Johnson whispered. "Pretty mean-spirited in all these fellows to just hang around here, without even trying to make a getaway. What d'ye say 'bout our trying it on, son?"

The familiar address increased the boy's dislike of the man, but he was too young to realize that he was being "sounded" by a spy. He was old enough, however, to know how to keep his mouth shut about the pending plan for an escape. He thought Johnson got nothing out of him, but in the many half-confidential talks the unpleasant Yankee forced upon him, perhaps he had revealed something after all. Perhaps, however, the newcomer got such information as he did from other men in the secret. Certainly he got somewhere an inkling of the plan of escape.

That evening, when he stood in a circle of sitting men to tell his story,—a simple tale of Northern birth, of a Southern home, of belief

in the Union, of raising a guerilla company to fight for it, of capture in a raid on a Confederate supply-depot,—the unpleasant memory which had been troubling Tom came back and hammered at his head until suddenly, as if a flashlight had been turned on the scene, he saw himself sprawling on the hearth of Uncle Mose's slave-cabin, with this man's hand clutching his ankle. He was sitting on the floor beside Colonel Rose. He leant against him and whispered:

"That man didn't come from Tennessee. He was overseer on a plantation in Alabama. He 'most captured me once. I b'lieve he's a spy."

Johnson caught the gleam of Colonel Rose's eye fixed upon him. He had seen Tom whisper to him. He faltered, stopped speaking, and sat down. Rose walked across the circle and sat beside him. He had snapped his fingers as he walked and half a dozen men had answered the signal and were now close at hand.

"What did you do before you turned guerilla?" asked Colonel Rose.

"I don't know that that's any of your darned business," said Johnson.

"Answer me."

The stronger man dominated the weaker. The spy sulkily said:

"I kept a general shop in Jonesboro', Tennessee."

"Ever live anywhere else in the South?"

"No."

"Ever do anything else in the South?"

"No, sirree. What's the good of asking such questions?"

The Colonel rose to his feet and said aloud:

"Major Hamilton."

"Here, sir," answered the Major.

"Didn't you live in Jonesboro', Tennessee, before the war?"

"Yes, sir."

"How long?"

"Seven years."

"Who kept the general store there?"

"Hezekiah Butterworth, from Maine."

"Did you know him?"

"Rather. We were chums. He and I left Jonesboro' together to join the army."

"Is this man he?"

Rose pointed to where Jake Johnson sat at his feet, cowering, covering his face with his hands. Other hands not too gently snatched Jake's hands from his face. Hamilton looked at him.

"He's no more Hezekiah Butterworth than he's General Grant."

By this time the whole prison community was crowded about Colonel Rose. The latter called again:

"Mr. Strong."

"Here, sir," Tom's voice piped up.

"Do you know this man?"

"Yes, sir." Tom told the story of Jake Johnson on the Izzard plantation.

There was an ominous low growl from the audience. Yankee overseers of Southern plantations were not exactly popular in that crowd of Northern officers. And evidently this particular overseer had been lying. But Colonel Rose lifted his hand and said:

"Silence. No violence. What we do will be done decently and in order." After this impressive speech, he suddenly yelled: "Ah, you would, would you?" and choked Johnson with every pound of strength he could put into the process. He had just seen him slip a bit of paper into his mouth and he meant to know what that paper was. It was plucked out of the spy's throat as he gasped for air. Upon it the spy's pencil had written:

"Plot to escape. Lieutenant Strong knows about it. Think Colonel Rose heads it."

It was to have been Jake Johnson's first report in his new business of being a spy. It put an end to all business on his part forever. Gagged and tied, he was pushed across the big room, while Tom watched uncomprehendingly, wondering what was to be done with the writhing man. Suddenly he understood, for he saw it done. Johnson was pushed into a window. Two kneeling men held his legs and another, standing beside him but screened by the wall, pushed him in front of the window. The Con-

federate sentry below obeyed his orders. There was no challenge, no warning. He aimed and fired at the prisoner who was breaking the laws of the prison by looking out of the window. What had been Jake Johnson, Yankee, negro-overseer, Confederate conscript, volunteer spy, fell in a dead heap to the floor of Libby. Gag and bonds were quickly removed, so there was nothing to tell the Confederates the real cause of the man's death when they came to remove the body. They had unwittingly executed their own spy.

It was right that the man should die, but the shock of seeing him done to death was too much for Tom. Weakened by the fatigues and hardship of the long captivity during which he had been carried from Ohio to Virginia and worn out by the sufferings of life in Libby and by the toil of the tunnel, the boy collapsed when Jake Johnson did and for a few moments seemed as dead as the man was. He was taken to the hospital-room, but the hospital in Libby was usually

only the anteroom of the grave-yard at Libby. One of the scarcest things in the Confederacy, the home of scarcity, was a good doctor. The armies in the field needed far more doctors than there were in the whole South, at the outbreak of the war. Medical schools were quickly created, but the demand for doctors so far outran the supply that by this time ignorant country lads were being rushed through the schools, with reckless haste, so that they were graduated when they knew but little more than when they began. A so-called surgeon was handling his scalpel six months after he had been handling a plow. Some of them barely knew how to read and write. It was inevitable that the prison hospitals should be manned by the poorest of the poor among the graduates of these wretched schools. A fortunate chance, fortunate that is for Tom, gave him, however, care that was both skilful and tender.

A few hours after the righteous execution of Jake Johnson there had been thrust into Libby a fresh group of prisoners, captured but forty-

eight hours before. Among them towered a jovial, bearded giant, an army surgeon, Major Hans Rolf. Libby was ringing of course with talk of what had happened there that day. The new prisoners quickly heard of Johnson and of Tom Strong. Within an hour, Hans Rolf had given his parole not to try to escape and had been allowed to station himself beside Tom's bed. Through that night and through the next day, he fought Tom's battle for him, doing all that man could do. When the boy struggled out of his delirium and saw Rolf's kind eyes beaming upon him, his first thought was that he was still in the clutches of Wilkes Booth in the railroad car. His right hand plucked feebly at his left side, where he had then carried the dispatches Booth sought. Hans Rolf saw and understood the movement.

"It's all right, Tom," he said. "Everything's all right. Go to sleep."

And Tom, still a bit stupefied, thought everything was all right and that he was home in New York, with Rolf somehow or other there too. A

gracious and beautiful Richmond woman, who gave her days to caring for her country's enemies, bent over him with a smile. The boy's eyes gleamed with a mistaken belief.

"Oh, Mother!" gasped Tom. He smiled back and sank gently into a profound sleep, from which he awoke to life and health. Again a Hans Rolf had saved a Tom Strong's life.

Night after night passed, one night of work by each man followed by two of such rest as lying spoon fashion upon a hard floor allowed. On the seventeenth night of the new tunnel work, Colonel Rose was digging away in it. It was over fifty feet long. His candle flickered and went out. The foul air closed in upon him. Hats were fanning to and fro, back in Rat Hell, fifty feet away, but the fresh air did not reach him. He felt himself suffocating. With one last effort he thrust his strong fists upward and broke through the surface. Soon revived by the rush of fresh air into the tunnel, he dragged himself out and found himself in the

yard that had been their aim. The tunnel had reached its goal. He climbed out and studied the situation. A high fence screened the yard from Libby. A shed with an easily opened door screened it from the street. At three A.M., February 6, 1864, Colonel Rose returned to prison.

That morning he told his news. Most of the men wanted to try for freedom the next night, but there was much to do to erase all traces of their work, so that, if the tunnel were not forthwith discovered after their flight, it could be used later by other fugitives. With a rare unselfishness, they waited for sixty hours. Meanwhile each of the fifteen had been authorized to tell one other man, so that thirty in all could make their escape together. Colonel Rose felt that this was the limit. A general prison-delivery would, he believed, result in a general recapture. Such a secret, however, was too mighty to keep. A whisper of it spread through the prison.

When Hans Rolf had saved Tom's life, he had been at once taken into the inner councils of the tunnel group. He had not expressed as

much joy in the plan as Tom had expected. The reason of this was now revealed. He declined to go.

"You see," he explained to Colonel Rose and Tom, "I gave my parole not to try to escape when Tom here was sick. I had to do so in order to be allowed to take care of him. I made up my mind not to ask to be relieved from it because if I had the Confeds. might have suspected some plan to escape was on hand. And they seem to have forgotten all about it, for they haven't cancelled it. So you see I'm bound in honor not to go. Don't bother, Tom." The boy's face showed the agony he felt that Hans Rolf's kindness to him should now bar Hans Rolf's way to freedom. "Don't bother. 'Twon't be long before I'll be exchanged. And p'raps I can save some lives here by staying. Don't bother. It's all right. I rather like this boarding-house."

The giant's great laugh rang out. The heartiness of it amazed the weary men scattered about the room. It brought smiles to lips that

had not smiled for many a day. Laughter that comes from a clean heart does good to all who hear it.

It was clear that Rolf could not go. He was an officer and a gentleman. Honor forbade it. Sadly, Tom left him.

On Tuesday evening, February 9, 1864, when the chosen thirty had crawled down the inverted "S" and the rope-ladder to Rat Hell, Col. H. C. Hobart, who knew the secret, but had gallantly offered to stay behind, so that he could replace the tell-tale bricks in the fireplace, replaced them. But before he could get upstairs, some hundreds of men had come down. The secret was a secret no longer. There was a fierce struggle to get to the fireplace, a struggle all the fiercer because it had to be made in grim silence, for there was a sentry but a few feet away, on the other side of the wall, in the hospital. The bricks were taken out again. In all, one hundred and nine Union officers got through the hole. Then, warned by approaching daylight, the less fortunate in the fight for freedom

put back the bricks and crept stealthily upstairs, resolved to try their luck the next night, if the tunnel were not before that discovered.

Tom had wormed his way through the inverted "S" among the first fifteen. On the rope ladder he lost his hold and fell in a heap upon the floor of Rat Hell. The huge rodents swarmed upon him, squealing and biting. He almost shrieked with the horror of it, but he sprang to his feet, threw off his tormentors, and ran across the room to the opening of the tunnel. His ragged clothes were still more ragged and his face and hands were bleeding from rat-bites, but he cared nothing for all this. Was he not on his way to freedom? On his way, yes; but the way was a long one. He might never reach the end. When he had pushed and pulled himself through the tunnel; when he had come out into the yard and gone through the shed; and when, at the moment the sentry in the canal street was at the further end of his beat, he had slipped out of the doorway and turned in the opposite direction,—when all this

had happened, he was out of prison, to be sure, but he was in the heart of the enemy's country, with all the risks of recapture or of death still to be run.

The men had all been cautioned to stroll away in a leisurely fashion, on no account to run or even to walk fast, and not to try to get away in groups of more than two or three. It was hard to walk slowly to the next corner. The boy made himself do so, however. Half a block ahead of him on the side street, he saw a couple of men walking with a somewhat faster stride. He hurried ahead to join them. A Confederate patrol turned the corner of Carey Street. He heard the two men challenged and he heard the little scuffle as they were seized. Their brief moment of freedom had passed. He stepped to one side of the wooden sidewalk and crawled under it. There was just space enough for him to lie at full length. Hurrying feet, the feet of men hunting other men, trampled an inch above his nose. His heart beat so that he thought it must be heard. The patrol reached the street

along the canal and peered into the darkness there, a darkness feebly fought by one flickering gas-lamp. Fortunately, nobody came out of the shed just then. The sentry happened to be coming towards it and the men inside were waiting for him to turn. The patrol had no thought of a general jail-delivery. It turned back with its two prisoners, tramped back over Tom's head to Carey Street, and took its captives to the prison. The boy crawled out from under the sidewalk as the next batch of fugitives, three of them, reached the corner. He ran down to them and warned them of the Carey Street patrol. The three men turned with him and walked along the canal. It was just after midnight. Not a soul was stirring. Not a light showed. As they walked unquestioned, their spirits rose. How fine to be free.

CHAPTER XI

TOM HIDES IN A RIVER BANK—EATS RAW FISH—JIM GRAYSON AIDS HIM—DOWN THE JAMES RIVER ON A TREE—PASSING THE PATROL BOATS—CANNONADED—THE END OF THE VOYAGE.

TOM had made up his mind how he would try to reach the Union lines. As he had escaped before from the locomotive-foray by pushing boldly into the enemy's country, so he would do now. He would try his luck in following the James River to the sea, for off the river's mouth he knew there lay a squadron of Northern ships, blockading Hampton Roads. The "Merrimac's" attempt of March, 1862, had never been repeated. Our flag was still there, in these February days of 1864, and Tom knew it. He had resolved to seek it there.

He explained his plan to his three comrades. They would steal a boat, row or drift down the James by night, hide and sleep by day, forage

for food upon the rich plantations, many of them the historic homes of Virginia, that bordered the broad river, and finally float to freedom where our war-ships lay. But the three men would have nothing to do with it. By land the Union lines were much nearer. They meant to stick to the land. They asked the boy to go with them, but he stuck to his plan. So, with hearty handshakes and a whispered "good luck!" he left them, went over a canal-bridge, and found himself upon the bank of the river. He was again alone.

Of his three temporary companions, one finally reached our lines, one was shot within a few hundred yards of his goal, and one was recaptured. Of the 109 who escaped from Libby, 48 were caught and thrust back into prison.

Tom walked along the river bank, prying in the welcome darkness for a boat. It would not have been difficult to steal it, if he could have found it. But at this point the James is wide and shallow and full of miniature rapids. It was utterly bare of boats. The boy's search could

not be carried on after dawn. He spent that day hidden in a clump of willows by the water-side. The excitement of the night had kept him up. Now the reaction from it left him limp and miserable and hungry as he never remembered being hungry before. It was hard work to "grin and bear it," but at least he tried to grin and he reminded himself a thousand times through that long, long day that he was much better off than if he were still a prisoner in Libby.

That night he followed the bank until he was below the city, still without finding a boat. There had been plenty of boats along this part of the river the morning before, but as soon as the escape from Libby had been discovered, all boats had been seized by the military authorities, to prevent their being used by the fugitives. They had been taken to a point below the town. As Tom wormed himself cautiously near this point, very cautiously, for he heard voices upon the bank above his head, and also the crackle of a camp-fire, he saw in the gray dawn a flotilla

of boats just below him. At first sight, his heart leaped into his mouth with joy. At the second sight, it sank down into his boots. For above the boats he saw a big Confederate camp and beyond them he saw a half-dozen small craft, negroes at the oars and armed men at bow and stern, patrolling the river. Hope left him. He crawled into a hiding-place in the bank. He was so hungry that he cried. But not for long. Stout hearts do not yield to such weakness long. If he could not escape in a boat fashioned by man's hands, why not in one fashioned by God? The early spring freshets of the James were making the river higher every hour. He saw in cautious peeps from the hole where he had hidden great trees from far-off forests, uprooted there by the high water, come plunging down mid-channel like battering rams. He noted that the patrol-boats gave these dangerous monsters a wide berth. If a trunk of a tree were to ram them or if the far-flung branches were to strike them, their next patrol would be at the bottom of the river. On a sandbank not a hundred

yards from the boy's lair a big oak had stranded. It lay quite still now, but it evidently would not do so for many hours, for the rising water lapped higher and higher against it. Tom made up his mind that that tree should be his boat—if only it were still there when it was dark enough for him to swim out to it. Through the daylight hours he watched it with lynx eyes, fearing lest it were swept along towards the sea before he could shelter himself in it. And through these daylight hours he grew ever more faint with hunger, until he told himself that he must have food, at any risk, at any cost. Without the strength it would give, he felt he could not possibly swim even the hundred yards that lay between him and the now tossing tree. There is truth in the line:

"Fate cannot harm me; I have dined today."

It is too much to do to face Fate on an empty stomach. Napoleon said that an army traveled on its belly. Men must have food if they are to march and fight.

A Confederate soldier sauntered along the shore and stopped just in front of the boy's hiding-place. He had a rude fish-pole. Either he knew how to fish, or the James River fish were very hungry. A string of a dozen hung from his shoulder. The sight of them was too much for Tom to stand. A raw fish seemed to him the most toothsome morsel in the world. He knew he was courting certain capture, but he was starving. He would pretend to be a Confederate himself. He spoke to the soldier, not out of the fullness of his heart, but out of the emptiness of his stomach.

"I'm hungry," he said, "give a fellow a fish, will you?"

The soldier turned with a start. He was a tall, gaunt man, an East Tennessee mountaineer, who had started to join the Union army when a Confederate conscript-officer seized him and sent him South, under guard, to serve the cause he had meant to fight against. East Tennessee was, as a rule, loyal to the Union. The men from there who were found in the Con-

federate army were like the poor peons who are supposed to "volunteer" in the Mexican army. "I send you fifty volunteers," wrote a Mexican mayor to a Mexican general, "please return me the ropes." Jim Grayson had not been tied up with a rope, but he had had a bayonet behind him, when he was put into the Confederate ranks. He was a man of intelligence and of rather more education than most of his fellow mountaineers. Many of them could not even read and write. Grayson had learned both at a "deestrik skule" and had actually had a year, a precious year, at a "high skule." The last thing he had read before starting to fish that morning had been the printed handbills that had been flung broadcast by the Confederate authorities, announcing the escape of 108 men and one boy from Libby Prison and offering rewards for their recapture. And the first thing he thought as he saw Tom in his hole in the bank was that he was probably the boy of the handbills. He meant to give the fellow a fish, of course, but if he found the fellow was that

boy he also meant to do what he could to help him go where he himself wanted to go, to the Union lines.

"Sholy, I'll give you a fish," he said. "You can have all you want. I'll light a fire and cook some for you."

"I can't wait," gasped Tom, wolf-hunger in his gleaming eyes. "I'm starving."

He tried to reach out for the fish and collapsed in utter weakness. With food at last within his grasp, he was too far gone to take it. Jim Grayson had been very hungry more than once in his thirty years of hard life. He saw that Tom was telling the truth.

"Hush," he whispered, for he had caught sight of some fellow soldiers on the bank, not a hundred feet away. "Hush, sumbuddy's comin'. You mus' take little pieces first. I'll cut one up for you."

He was drawing out his knife from a deep pocket when the soldiers stopped on the bank above their heads and shouted down, asking him to give them some fish too.

"Sholy," laughed Jim. "Here's some for you-uns."

He tossed half a dozen up to them and then sat down at the mouth of the hole that sheltered Tom, thinking to hide him in case the others came down the bank. His back was towards the boy. What was left of his catch hung within two inches of Tom's nose. That was Tom's chance. He tore off a couple of little fish and tore them to bits with his teeth. His first sensation was one of deathly sickness; his next one of returning strength. Grayson twitched the remaining fish into his lap. He knew the boy had already had too much food, for a first meal. Meanwhile he was chatting cheerily with his fellow soldiers, who fortunately did not come down the bank and soon moved off, leaving Jim and Tom alone. Now was the time for explanations.

"Don't be afeard," said Jim, with a kindly smile. "I 'low you be Tom Strong, bean't you? I guess you was in Libby day afore yisterday. I ain't goin' to give you up. I'm Union, I be,

ef I do wear Secesh gray. How kin I help you?"

The sense of safety, safety at least for the moment, was too much for Tom. He could not speak.

"Thar, thar," Jim went on, "it's all right. Jes' tell me what I can do. I'll bring you eatins soon ez night comes, but what'll you do then?"

Tom told him what he hoped to do then. It was a wild scheme to float down nearly two hundred miles of river through a hostile country, but yet it offered a chance of success. And if there was a chance of success for the boy, why not for the man?

"Ef so be's ez you'se sot on it," Jim said, at the end of the talk, "I vum I'll run the resk with you. You ain't no ways fit to start off alone. Ef you have to hist that thar tree into the James River, you cudn't a-do it. I kin. 'N ef you wuz all alonst, you mout fall off'n be drownded. We-uns'll go together. 'N then I'll hev a chanst to fight fer the old Union."

Tom was only too glad of the promised com-

pany. It was arranged that Jim was to come to him as soon as possible after nightfall, with whatever provisions he could lay his hands upon, and that then they were to get away on the queer craft Providence seemed to have prepared for them, provided only that Providence did not send the big tree swirling southward to the sea before they could reach it. The river was now considerably higher. It was tugging hard at its prey. Sometimes the tree shook with the impact of the rushing waves as if it had decided to let go the sandbank forthwith. If it did go before nightfall, they must try to find another. There were always others in sight, but they were far away in mid-channel, floating swiftly seaward. How could one of these be reached, if their fellow on the sandbank joined them? There was nothing to be done, however, except to wait. Tom's waiting was solaced by the eating of the rest of the fish. Man and boy agreed that the man must loiter there no longer. Making a fire would delay him beyond roll-call. So Jim went and Tom again ate raw fish, trying

to do so slowly, but not making a great success of that. He felt as if he could eat a whale.

Darkness came only a few minutes before Jim Grayson did. He brought with him a bundle of food, upon part of which Tom forthwith supped. He also brought his gun. "I'm a deserter now, you see," he explained to the boy, "and I'll be shot ef so be I'm caught. But ef I be caught, I'll shoot some o' they-uns fust."

They could dimly see the outlines of the big tree, now tossing in the waves that broke above the submerged sandbank, as if it were struggling to be free. They swam out to it, Jim strongly, Tom weakly. They reached it none too soon. Ten minutes later it would have started of its own accord. Jim's task in "histing" it was easy. They were afloat at once. The top of the tree, a mass of bare branches, for the tiny tender leaves of the early Southern spring had been swept away by the water, formed the bow of their craft. They both perched far back, leaning against the tangled roots. Jim gave a final push with one dangling foot and they were off. That

was all Tom knew for some time. He had fallen asleep as soon as he had snuggled securely into his place. He did not know it when they swept through the cordon of patrol-boats below, which hastened to give room to the vast battering ram. He did not even know that Jim's arm held him in place as the tree lurched and wobbled on its downward road. A few hours afterwards, he awoke, refreshed and hopeful, a new man, or rather a new boy. The night was clear. The outlines of both shores were visible. A young moon added its feeble light to the brilliant radiance of the stars.

"Where are we?" whispered Tom. He knew the human voice carries a great distance over water and while there seemed to be no one who could overhear, he would run no unnecessary risk.

"I never sailed no river before," Jim cheerily answered, "'n I dun know nothin' 'bout the Jeems River, but I 'low we've come 'bout a thousand mile. 'N it's nigh sun-up. How'll we-uns git to sho' 'n hide?"

"If we did that," said Tom, "we'd have to give up our ship. Don't let us do that. Let's say what Captain Lawrence said: 'Don't give up the ship!' We'll call her the 'Liberty' and sail her down to Hampton Roads. We can hide in the branches or the roots if we meet anybody on the river. Everybody will give us a wide berth. We have some food, thanks to you. Forty-eight hours more will see us through."

"All right, Captain," Jim Grayson replied. "You're the commander."

Up to that time, the Confederate private had been in command of the expedition, but now that the Union officer was himself again, he took charge of everything, much to Jim's content and also, we must admit, much to Tom's content.

The good ship "Liberty," Tom Strong, captain, Jim Grayson, mate, made a prosperous voyage. Its crew was thoroughly scared three or four times by the sight of Confederate craft, small and large. When a gunboat selected it as a floating target and plumped half-a-dozen cannon balls around it, the crew thought the end

had come. But nobody on the gunboat saw the two people cowering amid the branches of the tree. The gunners were untrained. Their aim was poor. And powder and cannon-balls were not so abundant in the Confederacy that the practice-firing could continue long. Early on the third morning of the voyage, they were in Hampton Roads, borne by the ebbing tide towards the Union squadron that lay under the guns of Fortress Monroe. As the sun rose above the horizon, our flag sprang to the mastheads of the ships. Tom felt like echoing Uncle Mose's triumphant phrase: "De Stars 'n de Stripeses, dey jest kivered de sky."

The "Liberty" would have gone straight out to sea, so far as any control by its crew was concerned. It did go out to sea, indeed, but not until after Tom and Jim had been taken from it by a boat from the Admiral's ship. Jim had fired off his gun to attract attention, as the "Liberty" neared the squadron, and then he and Tom had both stood up on the teetering trunk of their tree and shouted and waved their

shirts, which they had taken off for that purpose, as they had nothing else to wave, until help came. The "Liberty" had brought them to liberty. They said good-by to her almost with regret. But their joy was deep when they stood on the deck of the flagship, under the flag of the free.

CHAPTER XII

Towser Welcomes Tom to the White House—Lincoln Re-elected President—Grant Commander-in-Chief—Sherman Marches from Atlanta to the Sea—Tom on Grant's Staff—Five Forks—Fall of Richmond—Hans Rolf Freed—Bob Saves Tom from Capture—Tom Takes a Battery into Action—Lee Surrenders—Tom Strong, Brevet-Captain U. S. A.

THE warmest welcome Tom had at the White House was given him by Towser. The next warmest was given him by Uncle Moses and the next by Lincoln. The staff was glad to see him back, but many of them were jealous of the President's evident liking for him and would not have sorrowed overmuch if he had not come back at all. The patient President found time, amid all his myriad cares, to

listen to Tom's story and to make Secretary Stanton give a captain's commission to Jim Grayson, who was sent to his own mountains to gather recruits for the Union army. For Towser, time existed only to be spent in welcoming his young master home. He clung close to him, with slobbering jaws and thumping tail, through the first day, and the first night he managed to escape from Uncle Mose's care in the basement and to find Tom's attic room. Thenceforth, as long as Tom stayed at the White House, Towser stretched his yellow bulk across the threshold of his door every night and slept there the sleep of the utterly happy.

There were no utterly happy men under the White House roof. Lincoln's presidential term was drawing to a close. He was renominated by the Republicans, but his re-election at times seemed impossible. The Democrats had put forward Gen. George B. McClellan, once chief commander of the Union forces, but a pitiful failure as an aggressive general. A discontented

wing of the Republicans had nominated Gen. John C. Fremont. Fremont had not fulfilled the promise of his youth. At the beginning of the war, he had been put in command at St. Louis, had proved to be incompetent, and had been retired. He was still strong in the hearts of many people, but Lincoln feared the success, not of Fremont, but of McClellan. John Hay once said to the President:

"Fremont might be dangerous if he had more ability and energy."

"Yes," was the reply, "he is like Jim Jett's brother. Jim used to say that his brother was the greatest scoundrel that ever lived, but in the infinite mercy of Providence he was also the greatest fool."

Family sayings, when they are not loving, are apt to be bitter. One of the Vanderbilts said of a connection of his by marriage that he was "more kinds of a fool to the square inch than anybody else in the world."

McClellan, who seemed practically certain of success in August, 1864, was badly beaten in

November, when the battle of parties was fought out at the polls. Fremont had retired from the contest early in the campaign. At the first Cabinet meeting after the election, November 11, 1864, the President took a paper out of his desk and said:

"Gentlemen, do you remember last summer I asked you all to sign your names to the back of a paper, of which I did not show you the inside? This is it. Now, Mr. Hay, see if you can get this open without tearing it."

Its cover was so thoroughly pasted up that it had to be cut open. This done, Lincoln read it aloud. Here it is:

"Executive Mansion,
Washington, August 23, 1864.

"This morning, as for some days past, it seems exceedingly probable that this Administration will not be re-elected. Then it will be my duty to so co-operate with the President elect as to save the Union between the election and the inauguration; as he will have secured his election

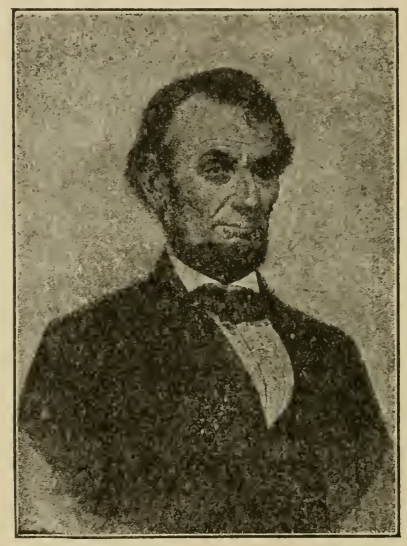
on such ground that he cannot possibly save it afterwards.

A. LINCOLN."

In that memorandum is the sign-manual of a great soul. Lincoln, believing his own defeat was written in the stars, thought, not of himself, but of how he, defeated, could best save the cause of the Union from defeat. A small man thinks first of himself. A big man thinks first of his duty.

Life was happy at the White House now. The President had been re-elected and it was clear that long before his second term was over, he would have won a victorious peace. The South was still fighting with all the energy brave men can show for a cause in the righteousness of which they believe, but after all the energy was that of despair. Grant was now in supreme command of the Union forces, East and West. He had been commissioned Lieutenant-General and put in command March 17, 1864. In commemoration of this event, the turning

point in the great struggle, Lincoln had had a photograph of himself taken. But two copies of it were printed. One Lincoln kept himself. One he gave Grant. Here is the one given Grant.



ABRAHAM LINCOLN

The new Lieutenant-General was hammering away at Richmond. The Mississippi, now under Union control, cut the Confederacy in two. All the chief Southern seaports, except Savannah and Charleston, had been captured. And in this

same month of November, 1864, Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman, who ranked only second to Grant in the United States army, cut loose from Atlanta, Georgia, captured two months before and began his famous march to the sea, with Savannah as his destination. He illustrated his own well-known saying: "War is hell." If it was hell in Sherman's time, what word can describe the horror of it in our day? He swept with sword and fire a belt of fertile country, sixty miles wide, from Atlanta to the sea. He found it smiling and rich; he left it a bare and blackened waste. He had destroyed the granary of the Confederacy and before the next month ended he had made his country a Christmas present of the remaining chief Southern seaport, Savannah. He wrote to Lincoln: "I beg to present to you as a Christmas gift the city of Savannah, with one hundred and fifty heavy guns and plenty of ammunition and also twenty-five thousand bales of cotton." Cotton was worth a dollar a pound in those days.

Early in 1865 Sherman swung northward

from Savannah, forced the surrender of Charleston, South Carolina, and joined Union forces advancing from the North at Goldsboro', North Carolina, March 23. Six days later Grant began the final campaign against the Confederacy. Six days before, Lincoln had said to the boy:

"Tom, would you like to see some more fighting?"

"Yes, Mr. President; very much."

"Well, you needn't tell anybody, but I guess there'll be some to see before long near Richmond. I've had you ordered from special service at the White House to special service with the Lieutenant-General. Here's the order and here's a letter to General Grant. I wouldn't wonder if he put you on his staff."

"How can I thank you, Mr. Lincoln?"

"The best way to thank anybody is to do well the work he gives you to do. Good-by, my son, and good luck."

With a pressure of Lincoln's huge hand Tom was sped on his rejoicing way. Two days later he was at Grant's headquarters, at City Point,

GEN. W. T. SHERMAN
St. Gaudens' Statue, New York

Virginia, near Fortress Monroe. He saluted and handed the General Lincoln's letter. The soldier sat, a silent sphinx, for a moment. Then he looked up at Tom with a quizzical but not unkindly smile, and said:

"Have you learned anything since you brought me dispatches at Fort Donelson and Vicksburg?"

"I hope so, General."

"Sometimes the President sends me people for political reasons. I suppose he has to. But I don't take them if I know it. Have you any political influence behind you?"

"Not a bit, sir." Tom laughed at the thought.

"You laugh well. You and Horace Porter ought to get on together. He laughs well, too. You can serve on my staff.

"I thank you, General."

Tom saluted and walked away, to find Horace Porter, whom he found to be a very nice fellow indeed. One of the first things the nice fellow did for him was to get him a good horse. There

was no lack of horses at headquarters. The difficulty was not to find one, but to choose the best of many good ones. Tom, who had a good eye for a horse, found one that exactly suited him except as to color. He was of a mottled gray. The boy did not much care for such a color, but he knew it had its advantages. It does not advertise its presence. Where a black, a white or a bay horse would stand out and make a mark for hostile sharpshooters, a mottled gray might well elude their view. And the horse, apart from this, was just what he wanted. He paced fast, he galloped fast, and he walked fast, which is a rare and precious accomplishment in a horse. The average horse walks, as a rule, slower than the average man. In an hour, he covers a quarter-of-a-mile less ground. One question remained to be settled.

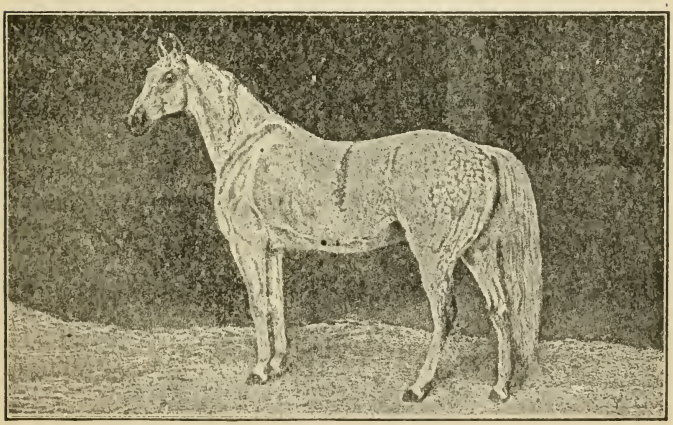
"Can he jump?" asked Tom.

"Jump, is it?" answered the soldier-groom. "Shure, the cow that jumped over the moon couldn't lift a leg to him."

"You bet your life he can jump," said Horace

Porter. "General Grant has ridden him twice and I saw him put Bob over a fence or two."

Not long afterwards Tom did bet his life on Bob's jumping. He was named Bob before the United States took him. He had been captured the month before and had come across the lines with his name embroidered by some woman's hand on his saddle-blanket and with his late



BOB

owner's blood upon his saddle. He was a tall, leggy animal who showed a trace of Arabian blood and who needed to be gentled a bit to get his best work out of him. His mouth was ap-

preciative of sugar and his eyes were appreciative of kindness.

Both dogs and horses talk with their eyes.

"I like my new master," was what Bob's eyes said to Tom.

It was through a chance suggestion of Colonel Porter that the boy saw most of what he did see of the final fight for freedom. Porter had presented Tom to Gen. Philip H. Sheridan, who was then at City Point, receiving Grant's final instructions for the twelve-day campaign that ended in the fall of Richmond and the surrender of Lee's brave army. Sheridan was a stocky, red-faced young Irishman, a graduate of West Point, and a born leader of men, especially of cavalrymen. He liked the clear-eyed lad who stood respectfully before him. He had done too much in his own youth to think Tom was useless because he was so young. Porter saw that the boy had made a good impression. He ventured a suggestion.

"Why don't you take young Strong with you, General?"

Sheridan turned sharply to Tom, asking:

"Can you ride?"

"Oh, yes, sir. I've ridden ever since I can remember."

"Well, that's not so very long a time. But I'll take your word for it. Would you like to go with me?"

"I'd like it better than anything else in the world, General."

Tom had rejoiced in the idea of being with Grant, but he knew that the commander-in-chief must stay behind his lines and that his staff could catch but glimpses of the fighting, when they were sent forward with orders, whereas with Sheridan he might be in the very thick of the fighting itself. His ready answer and the joy that beamed in his eyes pleased the fighting Irishman.

"Can I borrow him of General Grant?" Sheridan asked Porter.

"I'll answer for that," Porter replied. "The General told me to put Strong to whatever work I could find for him to do."

"Come ahead," said Sheridan. "You'll see some beautiful fighting!"

Sheridan loved fighting, but he made no pretense of never being afraid. He thought a general should be close to the front, to keep his soldiers' spirits high.

"Are you never afraid?" Charles A. Dana, then Assistant Secretary of War, once asked him.

"If I was, I should not be ashamed of it. If I should follow my natural impulse, I should run away always at the beginning of the danger. The men who say they are never afraid in a battle do not tell the truth."

March 29, 1865, the twelve-day campaign began. The cavalry swung out towards Five Forks, where Lee's right wing lay behind deep entrenchments. April 1, Sheridan attacked in force. Americans fought Americans with stubborn bravery on both sides. The issue was long in doubt. Sheridan and his staff were close to the firing-line, so that Tom had but a few hun-

STATUE OF GEN. PHILIP H. SHERIDAN
Sheridan Square, Washington, D. C.

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dred yards to gallop under fire when his general said to him:

"Tell General Griffin to charge and keep charging."

Griffin's order to his troops was so quickly given that it seemed an echo of the order Tom brought him. It was the boy's business to return forthwith and report upon his mission, but he simply couldn't do it. There were the Confederate lines manned with hungry soldiers in the remnants of their gray uniforms, the Stars-and-Bars flying above them. And there were battalions of blue-clad cavalry, men and horses in prime condition, straining to start like hounds upon a leash. Griffin's order was the electric spark that fired the battery. The men shouted with joy as they spurred their horses into a mad gallop. The shout was answered by the shrill "rebel yell" from the dauntless foe in the trenches. The charging column shook the ground. In its foremost files rode Second-lieutenant Tom Strong, forgetful of everything else in the world but the joy of battle. Musketry

and artillery tore bloody lanes in the close-packed column. Men and horses fell in heaps upon the blood-stained ground. But the column went on. At dusk of that April day it poured over the parapets so bravely held. Even then the fight was not over. There was still stout resistance. The two armies were a mass of struggling men, shooting, stabbing, striking. The battle had become a series of duels man to man. Tom, pistol in hand, rode at a big Kentuckian, but the gray-clad giant dodged the bullet, caught his own unloaded musket by the muzzle, and dealt the boy a blow with its butt that knocked him off his horse and left him senseless on the ground.

A few minutes later, when he came to his senses, he felt as if he were a boy annexed to a shoulder twice as big as all the rest of his body. It was on his shoulder that the blow of the clubbed musket had gone home. The fall from his horse had stunned him. Bob was standing over him, as Black Auster stood over Herminius, nuzzling at the outstretched hand of this

silent, motionless thing that had been his master. They had been together for less than a week, but a day is often long enough for a horse to find out that his master is his friend. Tom had been more careful of his horse's comfort than of his own. Now the good gray had stood by him and over him, perhaps saving him from being trampled to death in that fierce last act of the Drama of Five Forks. Bob whinnied with joy as Tom's eyes slowly opened again. He thrust his muzzle down along the boy's cheek and the boy caught hold of the flowing mane with his right hand and pulled himself upon his feet again. His left arm hung useless by his side. One glance told him the battle was won. The duels were over. The Confederates were in full retreat. A stream of prisoners was already flowing by him. He mounted and followed it to Sheridan's headquarters. There the skillful fingers of a surgeon found that no bones were broken. The swollen shoulder was dressed and bandaged. The healthy blood that filled Tom's veins did much to make a speedy cure.

So did the joy of victory. Sheridan had done what Grant had given him to do. He had driven back Lee's right flank and cut the railroad by which Lee must escape from Richmond, if escape he could.

Richmond was doomed. The next morning, Sunday, April 2, 1865, Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederate States of America, sat in his pew in St. Paul's Church, Richmond. The solemn service began. Soon there was a stir at the door, a rustle, a turning of heads away from the chancel, where the gray-haired rector stood. Swiftly a messenger came up the aisle. Davis rose from his knees to receive the message. The service stopped. Every eye was bent upon the leader of the Lost Cause. He put on his spectacles, opened the missive, and read it amid a breathless silence. It told him that the Cause was lost indeed. It was from Lee, who wrote: "My lines are broken in three places. Richmond must be evacuated this evening." There was no sign of feeling upon Jefferson Davis's impassive face, as he read the fateful dispatch.

Without a word, without a sign, he left the church with the wife whose utter devotion had helped him bear the burden of those terrible years, during which proud hope gradually gave way to sickening fear. Davis was not of those weak men who despair. There was still a little hope in his heart, despite the tremendous blow Lee's letter had dealt him. He walked down the aisle with head as high as though he were marching to assured victory. But through the congregation there ran the whisper "Richmond is to be evacuated." A panic-stricken mob poured out of the church with faltering steps behind Jefferson Davis's firm, proud ones. Early that afternoon the Confederate Government fled. Early the next morning, Monday, April 3, 1865, Gen. Godfrey Weitzel marched his negro troops into the Confederate capital. The flag of the free floated from the dome of the Statehouse, which almost from the earliest days of the war had sheltered what was now indeed the Lost Cause. It was raised there by Lieut. Johnston L. De Peyster, a youth of

eighteen, who had carried it wrapped around the pommel of his saddle for some days, hoping for the chance that now came to him. The second Union flag that was raised that day in Richmond was over Libby. The prison gates gave up their prey. The prisoners poured out, some too weak to do more than smile, others in a frenzy of joy. Major Hans Rolf, reduced by hunger to a long lath of a man, had lost none of his spirit.

"Now, boys," he shouted, "three times three for the old flag!"

The cheers rang out in a feeble chorus and then there rang out Han's contagious laughter.

"Ha! ha!" he roared. "We're free, boys, we're free."

By that Sunday night, the fate of Petersburg was sealed. Grant had ordered an assault in force at six o'clock Monday morning, but the Confederates abandoned their works in the gray dawn and our troops met little resistance in taking over the town. "General Meade and I," says General Grant in his "Personal Memoirs," "entered Petersburg on the morning of the

third and took a position under cover of a house which protected us from the enemy's musketry which was flying thick and fast there. As we would occasionally look around the corner, we could see . . . the Appomattox bottom . . . packed with the Confederate army. . . . I had not the heart to turn the artillery upon such a mass of defeated and fleeing men and I hoped to capture them soon."

"Let us follow up Lee," Meade suggested. He was a better follower than a fighter. He had followed Lee before, from Gettysburg to Richmond, without ever attacking him.

"On the contrary," Grant replied, "we will cut off his retreat by occupying the Danville railroad and capture him. He must get to his food to keep his troops alive. We will get between him and his food."

With constant fighting this was done. By Wednesday, April 5, the Union lines were drawn about the Confederate army. Sheridan, hampered by Meade's slowness, was urgent that Grant should come to the front. He sent mas-

sage after message to that effect to Grant on Wednesday. A scout in gray uniform was entrusted with the second message. He was made up to look like a Confederate scout, but he was Tom Strong. He had put on his disguise at Sheridan's headquarters. As he stood at attention to receive his orders, Sheridan laughed and said:

"You make a good 'Johnny Reb.' Do you chew tobacco?"

Surprised at the question, Tom said he didn't.

"Well, you may have to begin the habit today. You're to take this message to General Grant. If you're caught, chew it—and swallow it quick."

He handed the boy a bit of tinfoil. It looked like a small package of chewing-tobacco, but it contained a piece of tissue-paper upon which Sheridan's message was written.

The ride from the left flank to the center was not without danger. Tom, duly provided with the password, could go by any Union forces without difficulty, but the country swarmed with Confederates, some of them deserters,

many of them straggling detachments cut off from the main army and seeking to rejoin it, all of them more than ready to capture a Union soldier and his horse.

The boy climbed a little clumsily into the saddle. His left shoulder still felt like a big balloon stuffed full of pain. But there was nothing clumsy in his seat, as Bob shot off like an arrow at the touch of Tom's heel on his flank. It was a beautiful, bright April morning, too beautiful a day for men to be killing each other. Evidently, however, it did not seem so to the commander of a company of Confederate cavalry, who had laid an ambush into which Tom gayly galloped. He heard a sharp order to halt. He saw men ride across the road in front of him. He whirled about, only to see the road behind him blocked. He was fairly trapped. But there was one chance of escaping from the trap and Tom took it. His would-be captors had come from the left of the road, its northern side, for he was traveling east. On the south was a high rail-fence, laid in the usual zigzags, one of the

few which had not fed the camp-fires of Northern Virginia. It was a good five feet high; it was only a few feet away; Bob was standing still for a second in slippery mud. It was not at all the kind of place to select for a jump, but the Confederates had selected the place, not Tom. He remembered Colonel Porter's saying "You can bet your life Bob can jump," and he bet his life on Porter's being right. He put Bob at the fence. The gallant gray, as if he sensed his master's danger, took one bound toward the rails, gathered himself together into a tense mass of muscle, and rose into the air like a bird. As he flew over the top-rail, carbines cracked behind him, but as he leaped southward across the countryside, a ringing cheer followed him too. The brave Southerners rejoiced in the brave feat that took their captive into freedom. Their jaded horses could not follow. There was no pursuit.

It took Tom some hours to double back towards Grant's headquarters. He met long lines of Union cavalry, infantry, and artillery pressing forward to strengthen Sheridan's forces. They

were going west and they choked every road and lane and path by which the boy sought to go east. They had begun their march at three o'clock that morning. They had had no breakfast. They carried no food. Their wagon-trains were miles in the rear. It was their fourth day of continuous fighting. They had a right to be tired, but they were not tired. They had a right to be hungry, but they were not hungry. When the air was full of victory, what did an empty stomach matter? Cheering and singing, they swept along. The end of four years' fighting was in sight. The hunted foe was trying to slink away to safety, as many a fox, with hounds and huntsmen closing in upon him, had tried to do on these Virginian fields. Never were huntsmen more anxious to be "in at the death" than were those joyous Union soldiers on that memorable April day.

It was nearly night when the boy reached headquarters, saluted the commander-in-chief, said "A message from General Sheridan," and handed over the little tinfoil package.

"You can go back with me," said Grant. "That horse of yours is Bob, isn't it?" Grant never forgot a horse he had once ridden.

Within an hour the General and his staff, with a small cavalry escort, started for Sheridan's headquarters. By ten that night the two were together. Sheridan was almost crying over the orders Meade had given him. By midnight Sheridan was happy. "I explained to Meade," say the "Personal Memoirs," "that we did not want to follow the enemy; we wanted to get ahead of him; and that his orders would allow the enemy to escape. . . . Meade changed his orders at once."

That change of orders incidentally put Tom Strong the next day into the hottest fight of his life. This was the battle of Sailor's Creek, almost forgotten since amid the mightier happenings of that wonderful April week, but never forgotten by Tom Strong. Our forces had attacked Lee's retreating legions, retreating toward the provision trains that were their only hope of food. The fight was fierce. We had

attacked with both infantry and cavalry, but our gallant fellow-countrymen held their lines unbroken. Then with a thunder of wheels our field artillery came into action. The Confederate guns were shelling the hillside up which the plunging horses drew our cannon. There were six horses in each team, an artilleryman riding each near horse and holding the off horse of the pair by a bridle. Tom had come up with orders and was standing by General Wright as the guns bounded up the hillside. Bob stood behind his master, whinnying a bit with excitement.

General Wright snapped his watch shut impatiently.

"They're ten minutes late," he complained. "We're beaten if we don't get 'em into action instantly. Good Heavens! there goes our first gun to destruction!"

A Confederate shell had struck and burst close to the leaders. A fragment of it swept the foremost rider from his seat and from life. The two horses he had handled reared, plunged,

jumped to one side. The six horses were huddled into a frightened heap. The two other soldiers could do nothing with the leaders out of control. The gun stopped short. And behind it stopped all of one of the two lines of advancing artillery.

"Take that gun into action!"

Tom heard the General's brief command and ran toward the huddled horses. He sprang into the saddle, seized both bridles, and drove on. As he did so, another Confederate shell burst beside the off horse. Its fragments spared the foremost rider this time, but they dealt death to one of his two comrades. The man in control of the wheelers threw his right arm out and toppled over into the road, dead before the heavy cannon-wheel crashed and crushed over him. The leaders, so skillfully handled that their very fear made them run more madly into danger, tore ahead, keeping the other four horses galloping behind them, until the gun was in position. It roared the news of its coming with a well-aimed shot into the midst of the

Tom Takes a Battery Into Action

enemy's forces. Its fellows fell into line and followed suit. The infantry and cavalry attacked with renewed spirit. Sullenly and savagely, fighting until darkness forbade more fighting, Lee's troops withdrew towards the west, with the Union forces pounding away at them. They left a mass of dead upon the battlefield, lives finely lost for the Lost Cause, and they also left as prisoners six general officers and seven thousand men. More than a third of all the prisoners taken in the battles before the final surrender were taken at the battle of Sailor's Creek. Tom had stuck to his new arm of the service through the three hours of fighting. The guns had been continually advanced as the Southerners retreated. They had been continually under fire. Nearly half the gunners had been killed or wounded. When the fight was over, Tom remembered for the first time his own wounded shoulder. He had never thought of it from the moment when he had sprung upon the artillery horse. Now it began to throb with a renewed and a deeper pain, as if resenting his

ignoring of it so long, but the new pain also vanished when he rejoined General Wright and heard him say:

"Mr. Strong, you helped to save the day. I shall recommend you for promotion for distinguished bravery under fire."

The boy saluted, his heart too full to speak. As he rode away upon Bob, some of the joy in his heart must have got into Bob's heels, for Bob pirouetted up the main street of the little town of Farmville, late that night, as though he were prouder than ever of his master.

Farmville was now headquarters. Grant was there, in a bare hotel, not long before a Confederate hospital. It was from the Farmville hotel that he wrote to Lee a historic note. It ran thus:

"Headquarters Armies of the U. S.

5 P.M., April 7, 1865.

"General R. E. Lee,

Commanding C. S. A.:

The results of the last week must convince you of the hopelessness of further resistance on

the part of the Army of Northern Virginia in this struggle. I feel that it is so, and regard it as my duty to shift from myself the responsibility of any further effusion of blood by asking of you the surrender of that portion of the Confederate States army known as the Army of Northern Virginia.

U. S. GRANT,
Lieut.-General."

Under a flag of truce, this note reached General Lee that evening, so near together were the headquarters of the contending armies in those last days. His letter in reply, asking what terms of surrender were offered, reached Grant the next morning while he was talking on the steps of the Farmville hotel to a Confederate Colonel.

"Jes' tho't I'd repo't to you, General," said the Colonel.

"Yes?"

"You see I own this hyar hotel you're a-occupyin'."

"Well, sir, we shall move out soon. We are

moving around a good deal, nowadays. Why aren't you with your regiment?"

"Well, you see, General, I am my regiment."

"How's that?"

"All the men wuz raised 'round hyar. A few days ago they jes' begun nachally droppin' out. They all dun dropped out, General, so I jes' tho't there wan't any use being a cunnel without no troops and I dun dropped out too. Here I be? What you goin' to do with me, General?"

"I'm going to leave you here to take care of your property. Don't go back to your army and nobody'll bother you."

That was a sample of the way in which the beaten army was melting away. Not even the magic of Lee's great name could hold it together now. But the men who did not drop out fought with heroism to the bitter end.

The next day, Saturday, April 8, 1865, Sheridan captured some more of Lee's provision trains at Appomattox Station and on Sunday, April 9, Lee's whole army attacked there,

still seeking to cut its way out of its encircling foes. Its brave effort was in vain. Held in a vice, it threw up its hands. A white flag flew above the Confederate lines.

Grant had spent Saturday night struggling with a sick headache, his feet in hot water and mustard, his wrists and the back of his neck covered with mustard-plasters. On Sunday morning, still sick and suffering, he was jogging along on horseback towards the front, when a Confederate officer was brought before him. He carried a note from Lee offering to surrender. "When the officer reached me," writes Grant, "I was still suffering with the sick headache; but the instant I saw the contents of the note, I was cured." The ending of the war ended Grant's headache.

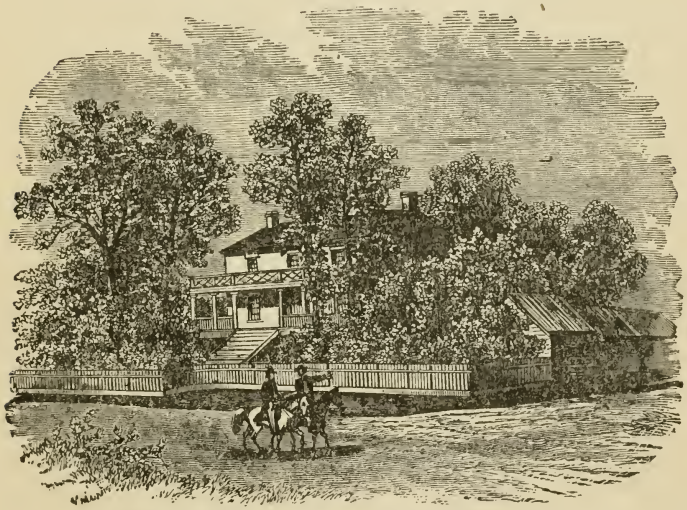
The two commanders met at Appomattox Court House, a sleepy Virginian village, five miles from the railroad and endless miles from the great world. It lies in a happy valley, not wrapped in happiness that April day, for Sheri-

dan's forces held the crest at the south and Lee's were deployed along the hilltop to the north. A two-hour armistice had been granted. If that did not bring the end desired, that end was to be fought out with all the horrors of warfare amid the peaceful houses that had straggled together to make the peaceful little town.

At the northern end of the village street, surrounded by an apple orchard, stood a two-story brick house with a white wooden piazza in front of it. It was the home of Wilmer McLean, a Virginia farmer upon whose farm part of the battle of Bull Run had been fought at the outbreak of the war. Foreseeing that other battles might be fought there—as the second battle of Bull Run, in 1862, was—he had sold his property there and had moved by a strange chance to the very village and the very house in which the final scene of the great tragedy of this war between brothers was to be played. Here Lee awaited Grant.

The Union general had gone to Sheridan's headquarters before riding up to the McLean

house. Sheridan and his staff had gone on with him. Least important of the little group of Union officers who followed Grant into the presence of Lee was Tom Strong, but the boy's heart beat as high as that of any man there.



THE McLEAN HOUSE, APPOMATTOX COURTHOUSE

It was in the orchard about the house that the myth of "the apple-tree of Appomattox" was born. Millions of men and women have believed that Lee surrendered to Grant under an apple tree at Appomattox. That apple tree is

as famous in mistaken history as is that other mythical tree, the cherry tree which George Washington did not cut down with his little hatchet. Washington could not tell a lie, it is true, but he never chopped down a cherry tree and then said to his angry, questioning father: "Father, I cannot tell a lie; I cut it down with my little hatchet." That fairy story came from the imagination of one Parson Weems, who did not resemble our first President in the latter's inability to tell lies. Perhaps the myth of the apple tree will never die, as the myth of the cherry tree has never died. In 1880, when Grant's mistaken friends tried to nominate him for a third Presidential term, other candidates had been urged because this one, it was said, could carry Ohio, that one Maine, and so on. Then Roscoe Conkling of New York strode upon the stage to nominate Grant and declaimed to a hushed audience of twenty thousand men:

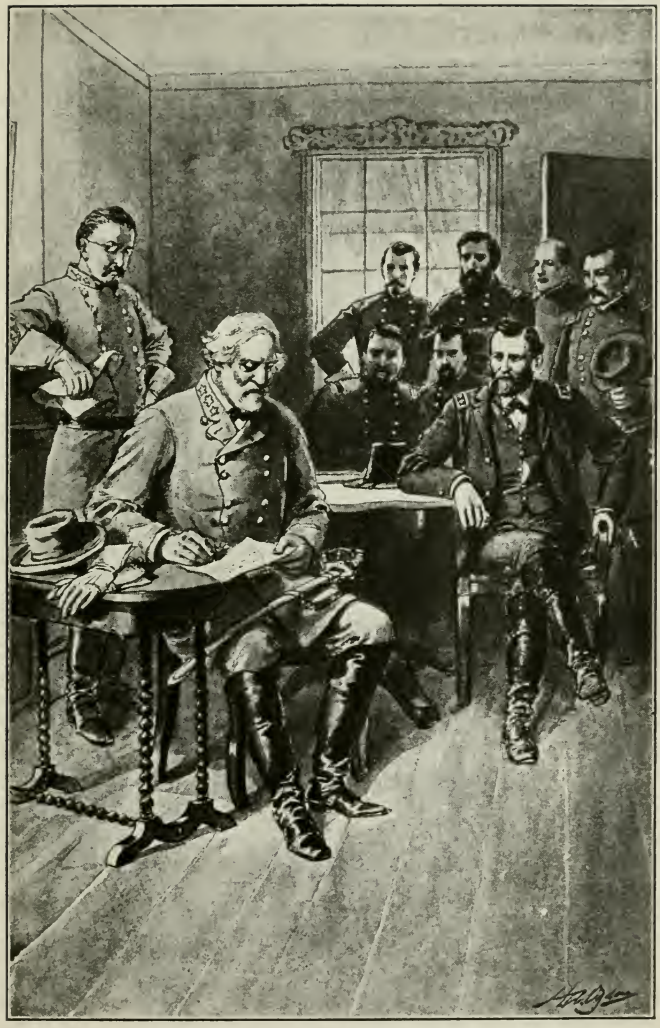
> "And if you ask what State *he* comes from,
> Our sole reply shall be:
> HE comes from Appomattox
> And the famous apple tree!"

The twenty thousand were swept off their feet by the magic of that myth. Grant was almost nominated—but not quite.

The historic interview began in the room to the left of the front door in the McLean house. Two very different figures confronted each other. Grant had not expected the meeting to take place so soon and had left the farmhouse where he had spent the night before in rough garb. He writes: "I was without a sword, as I usually was when on horseback in the field, and wore a soldier's blouse for a coat, with the shoulder-straps of my rank to indicate to the army who I was. . . . General Lee was dressed in a full uniform, which was entirely new, and was wearing a sword of considerable value, very likely the sword which had been presented by the State of Virginia. . . . In my rough traveling suit, the uniform of a private with the straps of a lieutenant-general, I must have contrasted very strangely with a man so handsomely dressed, six feet high and of fault-

less form. But this was not a matter that I thought of until afterwards."

Lee requested that the terms to be given his army should be written out. Grant asked General Parker of his staff, a full-blooded American Indian, for writing materials. He had prepared nothing beforehand, but he knew just what he wanted to say and he wrote without hesitation terms such as only a great and magnanimous nation could offer its conquered citizens. After providing for the giving of paroles (that is, an agreement not to take up arms again unless the paroled prisoner is later exchanged for a prisoner of the other side) and for the surrender of arms, artillery, and public property, he added: "This will not embrace the sidearms of the officers nor their private horses or baggage. This done, each officer and man will be allowed to return to their homes, not to be disturbed by United States authority so long as they observe their paroles and the laws in force where they reside." There are some mistakes in grammar in these words, but there are no mistakes in



LEE SURRENDERS TO GRANT

magnanimity. When Lee, having put on his glasses, had read the first sentence quoted above, he said with feeling:

"This will have a happy effect upon my army."

He went on to say that many of the privates in the Confederate cavalry and artillery owned their own horses; could they retain them? Grant did not change the written terms, but he said his officers would be instructed to let every Confederate private who claimed to own a horse or mule take the animal home with him. "It was doubtful," writes Grant, "whether they would be able to put in a crop to carry themselves and their families through the next winter without the aid of the horses they were then riding." Again Lee remarked that this would have a happy effect. He then wrote and signed an acceptance of the proposed terms of surrender. The war was over. The first act of peace was our issuing 25,000 rations to the army we had captured. For some days it had lived on parched corn.

The news of the surrender flashed along the waiting lines like wildfire and the Union forces began firing a salute of a hundred guns in honor of the victory. "I at once sent word," says

GEN. U. S. GRANT

Grant, "to have it stopped. The Confederates were now our prisoners and we did not want to exult over their downfall." This was the spirit of a great man and of a great nation. It was not the soldiers who fought the war who kept its rancors alive after peace had come. It was

the politicians, who tore open the old wounds and kept the country bleeding for a dozen years after the Lost Cause was lost.

On the morning of Tuesday, April 10, 1865, Grant and Lee again met between the lines and sitting on horseback talked for half an hour. Then Grant began his journey to Washington. His staff, including Tom, went with him. When they reached their goal, Second-Lieutenant Strong found he was that no longer. For General Wright had done what he had told Tom he meant to do. The recommendation had been heeded. Lincoln himself handed the boy his new commission as a brevet-captain.

"I was glad to sign that, Tom," the President told him, "and even Stanton didn't kick this time."

"You don't know how glad I am to get it, Mr. President," was the reply. "Now I'm a boy-captain, as my great-grandfather was before me."

"I'm not much on pedigrees and ancestry and genealogical trees, my boy," answered Lincoln.

"Out West we think more of trees that grow out of the ground than we do of trees that grow on parchment. But you're right to be proud of an ancestry of service to your country. When family pride is based on money or land or social standing, it is one of the most foolish things God Almighty ever laughed at, but when it is based on service, real service, to your country, to your fellowmen, to the world, why, then, Tom, it's one of the biggest and best things in God's kingdom. But remember this, son,"—Lincoln's eyes flashed in their deep sockets—"if a boy has an ancestor who has done big things, the way to be proud of him is to do big things yourself. Living on the glory of what somebody else has done before you is a mighty poor kind of living. I never knew but one man that was perfect and I'd never have known he was if he hadn't told me so. Nobody else ever found it out. But if we can't be perfect, we can grow less imperfect by trying every day to serve our fellowmen. Remember that, Tom."

CHAPTER XIII

The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln

ON the evening of Good Friday, April 14, 1865, Laura Keene, an English actress of great repute in America, was to play *Our American Cousin* at Ford's Theater, the chief place of amusement for war-time Washington.

That afternoon, Assistant-Secretary-of-War Dana was notified by wire that Jacob Thompson of Mississippi, once Secretary of the Interior under our poor old wavering President, Buchanan, afterwards a leading Secessionist, would take a steamship for England that evening at Portland, Maine.

"What shall I do?" Dana asked Stanton.

"Arrest him! No, wait; better go over and see the President."

So Dana went to the White House. Office-hours were over. He found Lincoln washing his hands.

"Halloo, Dana!" was Lincoln's greeting. "What's up?"

The telegram was read aloud.

"What does Stanton say?"

"He says to arrest him, but that I should refer the question to you.'"

"Well, no, I rather think not. When you have got an elephant by the hind legs and he's trying to run away; it's best to let him run."

Dana reported this to Stanton.

"Oh, stuff!" said Stanton.

But Thompson was not arrested, so that the last recorded act of Lincoln as President was one of mercy.

In the upper stage-box, to the right of the audience, that evening, sat Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, Mrs. Lincoln, a friend, Miss Harris, and an officer, Major Henry R. Rathbone. The cares of State seemed to have slipped for the moment from Lincoln's shoulders. He had bowed smilingly from the box in response to the cheers of the packed audi-

ence in the body of the house. He had followed intently the action of the amusing play, constantly smiling, often applauding. The eyes of the little party of four were bent upon the stage, about ten o'clock, when the door of the box was jerked violently open behind them. As they turned at the noise, Death stalked in upon them.

Five minutes before, Tom Strong had been idly strolling along Tenth Street and had paused at the theater door to read the play-bills posted there. A small group of belated play-goers was at the ticket-booth. A man shoved roughly through them. A woman's "Oh!" of surprise and protest drew Tom's attention to the man. He had seen him but thrice before, yet the man's face was engraved upon his memory. Once, at Charlestown, Virginia, Wilkes Booth had stood in the ranks of the militia, eagerly awaiting the execution of John Brown. Once, upon a railroad train north of Baltimore, Wilkes Booth had drugged the boy and left him, as the scoundrel

thought, to die. Once, upon a railroad platform at Kingston, Alabama, Wilkes Booth had recognized him and had again sought his death. Whose death did he seek to compass now? What was the Confederate spy doing here? Tom had scarcely glimpsed the hawk-like features, the pallid face, the flowing black hair of his foe, when Booth disappeared from his sight in the crowded lobby of the theater.

Instantly Tom pursued him. But he was delayed by the little group through whom Booth had elbowed his rough way. And when he reached the ticket-window, he found no money in his pocket with which to buy admittance. He had put on civilian clothes that evening and had left his scanty store of currency in his uniform. The wary ticket-seller, used to all sorts of dodges by people who wanted to get in without paying, laughed at his story and refused to give him a ticket on trust. Tom's claim that he was an officer caused especial amusement.

"That won't go down, bub," said the ticket-seller. "Try to think up a better lie next time.

And clear out now. Don't block up the passage-way."

"I *must* get in," said Tom.

"You shan't," snarled the man, sure that he was being imposed upon.

The doorkeeper, attracted by the little row, had come towards the ticket-window. He swung his right arm with a threatening gesture. As Tom started towards him he struck the threatened blow, but his clenched fist hit nothing. The boy had ducked under his arm and had fled into the theater. The doorkeeper pursued him. But Tom was now making his way like a weasel through the crowd. He had caught sight of Wilkes Booth nearly at the top of the right-hand staircase that led to the aisle from which the upper right-hand box was reached. Without any actual premonition of the coming tragedy which was to echo around the world upon the morrow, he still felt that Booth had in mind some evil deed and that it was his duty to prevent him. As he struggled toward the foot of the stairway, Booth saw

him, recognized him and smiled at him, a smile of triumphant hideous evil. Tom yelled:

"Spy! Confederate spy! Stop him! Let me follow!"

Upon the startled crowd there fell a sudden stillness. Nobody laid hand upon Booth, but everybody made way for the frantic boy who rushed up the stairway as the scoundrel he chased ran down the corridor. He clutched the newel post at the head of the stairway just as Booth flung open the door of the box. Tom ran towards him.

The door of the box was violently jerked open. Wilkes Booth sprang across the threshold. He put his pistol close to the head of the unarmed man he meant to murder. He fired. The greatest American sank forward into his wife's arms. High above her shrieks rose the actor's trained voice. He leaped upon the balustrade of the box, shouted "*Sic semper tyrannis!*" and jumped down to the stage. He was booted and spurred for his escape. His

horse was held for him near the stage-door. One of his spurs caught upon the curtain of the box, so that he stumbled and fell heavily. But he had played his part upon that stage many a time before. He knew every nook and cranny of the mysterious labyrinth behind the foot-lights. He rose to his feet, disregarding a twisted ankle, and rushed to safety—for a few hours. He reached his horse and galloped into the calm night of God, profaned forever by this hideous crime of a besotted fanatic.

The martyred President was taken to a neighboring house, No. 453 Tenth Street. In a back hall bed-room, upon the first floor, that that was still Abraham Lincoln, but was soon to cease to be so, was laid upon a narrow bed. Tom had helped to carry him there. Wife and son, John Hay, Secretary-of-War Stanton, and a few others crowded into the tiny room. Doctors worked feverishly over the dying man. Their skill was in vain. The slow and regular breathing grew fainter. The automatic moaning

ceased. A look of unspeakable peace came to the face the world now knows so well. In a solemn hush, at twenty-two minutes after seven in the morning of Saturday, April 15, 1865, the great soul of Abraham Lincoln went back to the God Who had given him to America and to the world. A moment later Stanton spoke:

"Now he belongs to the ages."

CHAPTER XIV

TOM HUNTS WILKES BOOTH—THE END OF THE MURDERER—ANDREW JOHNSON, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES—TOM AND TOWSER GO HOME.

THE assassination of Lincoln was not the only crime that stained that memorable night. Secretary-of-State Seward was stabbed in his sick-bed by one of Booth's co-conspirators. Attempts were made upon the lives of other Cabinet ministers. Many arbitrary arrests had been made during the war by Secretary Stanton. It had been said that whenever Stanton's little bell rang, somebody went to prison. That little bell had little rest this Saturday. Wholesale arrests were made of suspected Southern sympathizers who might have known something of the hideous conspiracy of murder. Stanton put all the grim energy of him into the pursuit of

the leading criminals. He was said never to forget anything. One of the things he had not forgotten was that Tom Strong knew Wilkes Booth by sight. He sent him from Lincoln's bedside, hours before Lincoln died, to join a troop of cavalry that was to pursue Booth. The road by which the murderer had left Washington was known. Hard upon his heels rode the avengers of crime. Wherever there was a light in one of the few houses along the lonely road, often where there was no light, the occupants were seized, questioned, sometimes sent to Washington under guard, sometimes released and sternly bidden to say nothing of the midnight ride. Piecing together scraps of information gathered here and there, studying every crossroad for possible hoof-marks of flight, the silent commander of the cavalrymen at last convinced himself that he was on the trail of the quarry. The troops broke into full gallop. A few minutes before dawn they reached a small village on the bank of the Potomac, where the fires of a smithy gleamed. They pulled up short

as the startled blacksmith came out of his sooty shed.

"What are you doing here?" demanded the captain.

"I've been—I've been—putting on a horse-shoe, sir."

"For what kind of a looking man?"

"He said his name was Barnard."

"I beg your pardon, sir," said Tom from his saddle, "but Barnard was the name Wilkes Booth once gave me for his own." At the beginning of the ride, Tom had described Booth's appearance to the captain.

"Was the man pale? Did he have long black hair?"

"Long black hair," answered the blacksmith, "but his cheeks were red. He seemed excited. While I was replacing the shoe his horse had cast, he kept drinking brandy from a bottle he carried. He never gave me none of it," the man added with an injured air.

"Did he say anything?"

"Yes, sir. He said I'd hear great news later

today, that the Southerners had won their greatest victory. I asked him where and he swore at me and told me to shut up. But he gave me a silver dollar. Perhaps it's bad. Is it?"

The blacksmith pulled out of his grimy pocket a dollar and showed it to the captain.

"Do you know who that man was?" was the stern command.

"No, sir, o' course I don't. I s'pose he was Mr. Barnard."

"He was Judas. He has murdered Abraham Lincoln. And he has given you one of the forty pieces of silver."

With wild-eyed horror, the smith started back. He flung the accursed dollar far into the Potomac.

"God's curse go with it," he cried. "Captain, the man went straight down the river road. He gave his horse a cut with his whip 'n he yelled 'Carry me back to ole Virginny!' and he went off lickety-split. He ain't half-an-hour ahead of you."

No need to command full speed now. Every man was riding hard. Every horse was putting his last ounce of strength into his stride. Within an hour, the hounds saw the slinking fox they chased. Booth, abandoning his exhausted steed, took refuge in a tumble-down barn. A cordon was thrown about it and he was called on to surrender. The reply was a shot. Tom heard the whiz of the bullet as it tore by him. The cavalry pumped lead into the barn. Once, twice, thrice they fired. At the first volley, the trapped murderer had again fired. There was no answer to the second and third. With reloaded carbines, the troopers charged, burst open the barred door, and rushed into the rickety shed. A man lay on the earthen floor, breath and blood struggling together in his gaping mouth. As they gathered about him, the Captain asked:

"Do you know this man, Captain Strong?"

"Yes, sir."

"Who is he?"

"Wilkes Booth, sir."

The sound of his own name half recalled Booth to life. He looked up at the boy who stood beside him and recognized him. Ferocious hate filled the glazing eyes. Then Wilkes Booth went to his eternal doom, hating to the end.

"Is he dead?" said the Captain, turning to a major of the medical service, who had galloped beside Tom on that fierce ride of the avengers. A big, bearded man knelt beside the body of Wilkes Booth, put his finger where the pulse had been and laid his hand where the heart had once beat.

"He is dead," answered Major Hans Rolf.

His body was thrust somewhere into the earth he had disgraced or else was flung, weighted with stones, into the river, all the flood tides of which could not wash away the black guilt of him. No man knows where the body of Wilkes Booth was buried.

"The king is dead! Long live the king!"

When Tom rode sadly up Pennsylvania Ave-

nue, with a crape-laden flag at half-mast over the Capitol, glad for the stern justice that had been dealt out to the murderer he loathed, but bowed down with grief for the murdered President he had loved, Abraham Lincoln was no longer President of the United States. In his stead, our uncrowned king was Andrew Johnson, of Tennessee, a Southern Unionist who had been elected Vice President when the people chose Lincoln a second time for their ruler. Johnson had been born to grinding poverty in a rough community where "skule-l'arnin'" was not to be had. He was a grown man, earning a scanty livelihood as a village tailor, when his wife taught him to read and write. He worked his hard way up in life, became a man of prominence in his village, in his county, in his State, until he was chosen for Lincoln's running-mate as a representative Southern Unionist. He was of course a man of native force, but he sometimes drowned his mind in liquor. That fatal habit pulled him down. He was a failure as a President, though thereafter he served his

State and his country well as a United States Senator from Tennessee.

The White House was changed under its new ruler. John Hay, full of cheer and wit, was abroad as a secretary of legation. Nicolay, his superior officer, was a consul in Europe. The Lincoln family had gone West through a sorrowing country, bearing the body of the martyr-President to its burial-place in Springfield, Illinois. For a while some familiar faces were left. At first, the same Cabinet ministers served the new President. For some time, Uncle Moses had to learn no new names as he carried about the summons to the Cabinet meetings. But the visitors to the White House had changed mightily. Rough men from Tennessee and the other Border States, some of them diamonds in the rough, swarmed there. Lincoln had never used tobacco. The new-comers both smoked and chewed. Clouds of smoke filled the lower story and giant spittoons lined the corridors and invaded the public rooms. Gradually the Republican leaders ceased to wait upon the President.

Among the people who left the White House soon after Lincoln left it was Tom Strong. On a bright May morning he walked across the portico, where Towser was eagerly awaiting him and where Uncle Moses followed him. Unk' Mose lifted his withered black hands and called down blessings on the boy who had been his angel of freedom and had led him out of bondage.

" De good Lawd bress you, Mas'r Tom. And de good Lawd bress dat dar wufless ol' houn' dawg Towser, too. 'Kase Towser, he lubs you, Mas'r Tom,—and so duz I," Uncle Moses shyly added.

The venerable old negro and the white boy shook hands in a long farewell upon the steps of the White House. Then Tom turned away from the historic roof that had so long sheltered him and walked to the railroad station, to take the train for New York. Towser trotted stiffly by his side, trying at every step to lick his master's hand.

Tom Strong studied hard at home and then

went to Yale, as his father had done before him.

Towser could not go with him. The laws of Yale forbade it. That is one of the chief disadvantages of being a dog. Soon after Tom went to New Haven, Towser went to heaven. At least, let us hope he did. He deserved to do so. One of the human things about Martin Luther, the stern founder of Protestantism in Germany in the Sixteenth Century, was that he once said to a tiny girl, weeping over the death of her tiny dog: "Do not cry, little maid; for you will find your dog in heaven and he will have a golden tail."

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